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Reviewed by John H. Yoder

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EDITORIAL

THE SECOND HALF OF JOHN OYER'S DEFINITIVE ARTICLE ON THE CENTRAL GERMAN Anabaptists presents an exhaustive treatment of their theology. The account, though based directly upon the source documents, is handicapped both by the paucity of the documents and the fact that most of them are records of trial interrogations in which the accusers set the questions. The same handicap falls upon the attempt to reconstruct the life and organization of the Anabaptists in this area. The resultant picture which emerges is not completely satisfying, but it is the best possible, and short of discovery of new documents, which is most unlikely, it is probably the final one. Oyer's interpretation is scrupulously fair, and true to the sources. It reveals a type of Anabaptism which in a few spots is not quite sure of its position on certain aspects of its faith and life, but nevertheless in its core is identical with the general Anabaptist movement. The few deviant persons or small groups are best explained as reflecting influences coming from the earlier revolutionary peasants' movement of 1524-1525, which was strong in this region. It is noteworthy, however, that the great majority had been fully "reformed" and become nonresistant in spirit and in practice, including such outstanding leaders as Melchior Rink and Hans Hut. A valuable feature of the treatment is the consideration of possible interrelations and cross-influences between Müntzer, Denk, Hut, and Rink. Most interesting is the suggestion of a possible influence of Jakob Strauss on Rink and the Thuringian Anabaptists, a suggestion which merits further careful study, particularly since Conrad Grebel reports reading some of Jakob Strauss' booklets in 1524 which he found "most evangelical."

HYMNS ARE THEOLOGICAL DOCUMENTS AS WELL AS RELIGIOUS POEMS, AND HAVE too often been ignored in the study of the doctrine and piety of Christian groups. Anabaptist hymnals, of which four major ones were published at about the same time in the mid-sixteenth century (1560-1570), are good illustrations of both points. In fact, for the German and Swiss Anabaptists their two hymnals, the *Ausbund* and the *Schon Gesangbüchlein,* furnish an important major block of source material for a study of their theology in the second half of the century. Rosella Duerksen's observations on the "Doctrinal Implications in Sixteenth Century Anabaptist Hymnody" are most welcome. Others have exploited some of this material on occasion, but her study is the most comprehensive one to date. Although it reveals nothing particularly new it does reinforce with additional evidence the picture of Anabaptist doctrines derived from such sources as the court records, the *Martyrs' Mirror,* and major Anabaptist writers.

ANABAPTISTS WERE OFTEN ACCUSED BY THEIR CONTEMPORARY OPPONENTS AS well as by their modern critics of an overemphasis on works, indeed of propagating a works-righteousness and slighting the role of divine grace. John C. Wenger has addressed himself to this question in his current article on "Grace and Discipleship in Anabaptism," querying the sources directly on what the Anabaptist fathers actually said on this subject. The result is convincing evidence that grace was an important emphasis in Anabaptist writings, and that the charge against them on this score is not borne out by the sources.

PAUL PEACHEY'S ILLUMINATING REPORT ON THE MODERN JAPANESE NON-CHURCH Christian movement *(Mukyokai)* is not only valuable for its depiction of one of the most dynamic movements in present-day Japanese Christendom, but also for its indications of considerable similarity between this movement and six-

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ANABAPTISM IN CENTRAL GERMANY
II. FAITH AND LIFE

JOHN S. OYER*

We turn next to a discussion of the religious ideas of the Anabaptists. What did the brethren believe? Any discussion of Anabaptist doctrines is made difficult by the fact that most Anabaptists were not theologically oriented or minded. There were exceptions to this, of course; individual figures can be found with an aptitude for, and interest in, theology. Some of the more promising of the younger intellectuals met early deaths. But the entire emphasis of the brethren was far more on the manner of Christian life than on a systematization of their religious ideas. Yet a presentation of Anabaptist thought is essential if one is to understand them against the background of the larger Reformation movement. In the account which follows the ideas of Melchior Rink will receive the principal attention, for several reasons. Rink was the only leader of strictly Thuringian Anabaptism capable of careful and systematic formulation and articulation of religious ideas[1]. Moreover, there is more material from the sources on his ideas than on those of any other leader. He speaks to us in a few writings of his own, in the account of his hearing in 1528, and in the testimonies of his followers.

For Rink's soteriological views one must begin as he did with a rejection of Luther's view of faith. Rink is reported to have spoken, in 1525, with some vehemence against the dead faith of the Lutherans and in favor of the living heroic faith of Müntzer.[2] By 1528 he was

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1 Alexander is a possible exception to this generalization. But the sources on Alexander are too scanty to build upon.

2 Menius, *Der Widdertauffer*, fol. H4r. Rink was a disciple of Müntzer at the time.

still rejecting the Lutheran doctrine of justification because it was lifeless, but the vehemence is less evident.[3] His disciples carried enough distaste for Lutheran dogma on justification to warrant the assertion that such rejection constituted a rallying cry of their faith.[4] Rink meant that Lutheran justification did not produce good works in the lives of those who claimed its healing powers.

On the occasion of the 1528 hearing Rink addressed himself briefly to the soteriological question. He was most impressed with the quality of love in God's nature. Man created in the image of God meant therefore a creature of love whose essential nature was love itself. God intended that man should love Him wholly, without restraint. But man built up a false love to disfigure and replace the true love of God in himself; he set up himself and his own acts as the means and power to his own salvation. Having made himself more important that he really was, he was not prepared to accept the mercy of God because he felt he did not need it. He needed no outside aid to stand righteous before the throne of God. "This attitude, this sin, was prefigured in Eden . . . in the revelation of the Law." The Law was given to teach men that "judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (Rom. 5:18). It was to be a schoolmaster to bring men to understand the fact of their sin (Gal. 3; Rom. 5). This sin was overcome so that man could stand righteous before God only when he could return to the original image of love. Rink did not explain how man could return to the true image. The two most necessary elements in that return were a true faith in Christ and a return to God's Word. Whereas in his delineation of sin Rink had used predominantly Pauline Scriptures, in this instance he turned to Johannine and Old Testament passages. Unfortunately the records do not give his explanation of them.[5] Rink's declaration was an adroit mixture of Paul and John, of Luther and Denk.

Rink's insistence that the essential nature of God was love did not exclude other attributes; they were merely not as important to him. In Raidt's summary of Rink's discussion he inserted some rather more Lutheran terms. Man was created in the image of God, which meant not only love but also wisdom, holiness, and righteousness. Rink offered no objection to this formulation. It is most significant that to Rink's doctrinal position up to this point his ex-

3 Raidt charged him with blaspheming the gospel of Christ on the basis of his declaration that Luther's teaching led one to the devil (*TA, Hesse,* p. 4). Rink denied the charge, but the records do not make clear which part he denied (*Ibid.,* p. 6). Rink was certainly capable of intemperate outbursts against Luther.

4 For example, see the testimony of Adam Angersbach, November 1531, printed in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 328.

5 *TA, Hesse,* p. 8.

aminers, Raidt and the Marburg theologians, could find no grounds for objection.[6] Anabaptist and Lutherans agreed in this instance on a minimal soteriological formulation.

Rink's critique of Lutheran faith as dead is amplified by an examination of his use of the term resignation *(Gelassenheit)*. It was impossible for Rink to dissociate ethics from salvation. The individual Christian in his approach to God must be divested of every remnant of self, desire, or attachment to temporal things—created things—and become completely resigned before God. He must renounce all sin, in the form of love of material goods, love of self, love of feasting, love of the world, else he was not ready for the grace of God. Rink did not believe that man was capable in himself of achieving complete resignation; indeed, if man were capable he would thereby be induced to return to his basic sin of pride and self-importance. God alone granted him the ability to become resigned. Man must first be instructed from the Word, through which God gave faith.[7] Rink nowhere defined faith, nor did he possess a bonafide doctrine of the atonement. It is surprising that the theologians did not uncover this deficiency.

He did declare himself on the controversial issue of faith versus works as a means of salvation. He was accused of teaching salvation by works, a charge which he vigorously denied.[8] His own emphasis on the necessity for good works in the life of the Christian cannot be taken to mean that he believed the Christian relied on good works at least partially for his salvation; he bitterly castigated the Catholics as teachers of this kind of salvation.[9] It is understandable that Rink's opponents accused him of teaching works-righteousness; they did not often hear him emphasize the distinctive work of God in man's salvation. To the Lutherans Rink spoke critically of their failure to sufficiently teach good works. The absence of spiritual fruit in their lives could be laid to an absence of teaching on works within their doctrine of justification. But to the Anabaptists, on the other hand, Rink emphasized man's absolute reliance on God's mercy, as over against any reliance whatsoever on self or works.[10]

6 *Ibid.*, p. 9. Zur Linden, *op. cit.*, p. 177, errs in ascribing to Rink the completely mystical view that Christ was not satisfaction for sin but example; he who will be saved must follow Christ's example in act and suffering. Although Rink's approach to soteriology is more mystical than Luther's, it is inconceivable that the theologians at the Marburg hearing would have pronounced themselves in agreement with a doctrine as thoroughly mystical as the one described by zur Linden. Rink tried to steer his course between Pelagianism, and, in his view, Luther's dissociation of justification and sanctification.

7 See Rink's baptismal formula as reported by Menius, *Der Widdertauffer*, fols. E2v.-E3r. Also testimony of Angersbach, in Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 329.

8 Nos. 1 and 12 of the points formulated by Raidt, *TA, Hesse*, pp. 4, 6, 7.

9 Tract on Baptism, *Sammelband*, fol. Kv.

10 Rink's baptismal formula as found in Menius, *Der Widdertauffer*, fols. E2v.-E3r.

Rink's soteriology was inseparable from his view of baptism. The act was to be a solemn pledge of conviction and faith on the part of the candidate. As such it was part of a sequence, a sixth step in a series of acts and attitudes which included a desire to live a better life, a desire to abstain from sin, willingness to repent, a belief in the forgiveness of sins, and being made righteous.[11] The act carried no grace of God; in itself, divorced from the larger process of which it was a part, it had nothing to do with salvation.[12] It was performed to seal the candidate's confession of faith, and to seal his solemn promise to follow Christ both in holiness of life and also in death if necessary.[13] The conscience of the Christian who had committed himself to Christ was clear. In contrast to Melanchthon, Rink made a sharp distinction between the baptisms of John and Christ. The distinctive characteristic of Christ's baptism was an ethical commitment in obedience and discipleship to the Master. The baptism of John required only the realization of one's sin, of one's inadequacy as over against God's Person and His demands in the Law. The baptism of Christ demanded a complete surrender of oneself and one's material goods to Him in loving obedience.[14]

For the Central German Anabaptists baptism was a bond not only with Christ; it was a bond also with one's brethren. The promise to give oneself completely to Christ brought the newly baptized individual into a closer fellowship with those of like faith.[15] Rink apparently did not emphasize this point as much as did other Central German Anabaptists.

Baptism carried with it also the outpouring of the Spirit. The records do not show how significant this outpouring of the Spirit was in Rink's theology; it is mentioned on only one occasion.[16] This outpouring may have been a singularly strong Pentecostal visitation,

11 Rink's meaning is not entirely clear for this last point, the sixth step. He speaks of the candidates being "uffgericht." But the context would make it appear that his meaning was very close to Luther's when the latter used the term "rechtfertight" (*Ta, Hesse,* p. 8).

12 Testimony of Bilg Scherer on what Rink taught, November 1531, in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 330.

13 Testimony of Hans Werner on what Rink taught, November 1531, *ibid.,* p. 331. Also Angersbach, *ibid.,* p. 329.

14 The passage is difficult. "Auffs erste/ das sie einen fragen/ Bistu ein Christ? Antwort er/ Ja/ So fragen sie weiter/ was gleubestu denn? Antwort/ Ich gleub an Gott/ meinen Herrn Jhesum Christ etc. Fragen sie aber/ Wie wiltu mir deine werck geben? Antwort/ Ich gebe sie einem alzumal vmb einen groschen/ Denn fragen sie weiter/ Wie wiltu mir deine guter geben/ auch vmb einen groschen? Antwort/ Nein/ So fragen sie abermals/ Wie wiltu mir denn dein leben geben/ auch vmb ein groschen? Antwort/ Nein/ So sagen sie denn/ Ey sihestu/ so bistu auch noch kein Christen nicht/ denn du hast noch keinen rechten glauben/ vnd stehest nicht gelassen/ sondern nimmest dich noch der Creaturen vnd dein selbst an/ Darumb bistu auch nicht recht jnn Christus tauffe mit dem heiligen geist/ sondern nur allein jnn Johannes tauff mit dem wasser/ getauffet/ Wiltu aber selig werden/ so mustu warlich entsagen/ vnn dich zu uor verzeihen/ aller deiner werck/ aller creaturen/ vnd zuletzt auch dein selbst/ vnd must allein jnn Gott gleuben." Menius, *Der Widdertauffer,* fols. E2v-E3r.

15 Testimony of Angersbach, in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 329.

16 Menius, *Der Widdertauffer,* fols. E2v.-E3r.

or perhaps only one of many already experienced visitations of the Spirit.

The larger part of Rink's recorded opinion on baptism is devoted to the subject of infant baptism. Thus in the 1528 hearing Rink formulated the baptism issue negatively: infant baptism was wrong. Indeed, it was blasphemy against God.[17] For to baptize infants was to pervert an act instituted by God to solemnize a relationship and a promise between God and man by changing it into one of lesser importance. Such perversion constituted a denial in the face of God of the purpose and worth of baptism. Infant baptism was contrary to reason and to the Biblical order and relationship between faith and baptism.

Baptism of infants was against reason precisely in that the candidates were utterly incapable of reason and understanding. Without reason and understanding the infant could not possibly comprehend the distinction between good and evil, the nature of sin, and the necessity for repentance and faith. To baptize apart from the preaching and experiencing of repentance and faith was unthinkable to Rink. Nor could an infant make any kind of commitment to Christ. Rink insisted that the act pointed back to an experience of repentance and forward to a promise to live in obedience to Christ.[18]

It would not do, said Rink, to argue that baptism of infants had its validity in the washing away of the guilt of original sin. That guilt had been completely removed for all mankind by the sacrificial death of Christ. Original sin itself was a different matter. Rink believed in its damning power as an inherent, congenital desire to do evil. It came to light slowly in a child, as the child gradually learned to distinguish between good and evil. But it damned no one until he sinned of his own will. Rink used Ezech. 18:20: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son," to demonstrate the impossibility of the newborn baby's being damned for what Adam had done. An individual was neither damned nor saved until he reached the age of accountability.[19] If the infant really required the sacrament of baptism, as the Lutherans taught, why not insist on infant communion also?[20]

17 *TA, Hesse,* p. 5. Angersbach declared that Rink taught that infant baptism was introduced by the papacy at the same time that it forbade clerical marriage. Testimony of Angersbach, in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 329.

18 This is what he meant when he described infant baptism as being opposed to the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ. *TA, Hesse,* p. 8.

19 Hearing of 1528, *ibid.,* pp. 4, 5, 8, 11, 13. Testimony of Heinz Ot, November 1531; Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 330.

20 Testimony of Angersbach, *ibid.,* p. 329.

A highly important reason for the rejection of infant baptism developed from the Scriptural sequence on faith and baptism. The brethren quoted Mark 16:16 interminably: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." They would not move from their literalistic interpretation of the verse: faith must absolutely precede baptism. Salvation was contingent upon following the correct sequence.[21] This same literalism meant that the rite itself was a necessity, almost a requirement for salvation. In their inauguration of believers' baptism the Anabaptists of course rejected the concept of its being a rebaptism, as the originators of the nickname "Anabaptist" intended. They were instituting the true baptism.[22]

Rink was dedicated to the issue of baptism as central in Anabaptist life and doctrine to a degree that is lacking in Swiss and Southern German Anabaptism. Rink had what can only be described as a passion for the topic. It is possible that the issue was more crucial for the Anabaptist-Lutheran conflict in Central Germany than for the Anabaptist-Swiss Reformed struggle. Rink believed that the devil entered the Lutheran body at the point of baptism. Even though the Lutherans tried to eliminate persons of erroneous doctrine from their midst through cleansing and reforming the church, they did not strike at the devil's foothold in their midst, the practice of infant baptism. So important it was to Rink.[23] Luther in turn considered the Anabaptist attack on infant baptism to be nothing less than an attack on the power and majesty of the Divine Word, and even on the omnipotence of God.[24] The issue was also hotly debated in the formative years of the Anabaptist movement in the Swiss environment, but always as a part of the larger issue, the church.[25]

Concerning the mode of baptism the Rink records are silent. The Anabaptists in Central Germany generally followed a pattern of questioning the candidate as to his desire for baptism, his experience of repentance and faith in Christ, and his desire to follow Christ. Then the candidate was requested to kneel. The officiating minister dipped his finger in water and made the sign of the cross on his fore-

21 Hearing of Rink in 1528, *TA, Hesse,* p. 11; Angersbach testimony, in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 329; Werner testimony, *ibid.,* p. 331; Thomas Spiegel von Ostheim testimony, *ibid.,* p. 230; Schnabel in the "Verantwortung," *TA, Hesse,* p. 168.

22 Rink's letter to Eberhard von der Thann, *c.* 1530, in *TA, Hesse,* p. 31; so also the Anabaptists in the Harz, Jacobs, *op. cit.,* p. 469.

23 Tract on Baptism, *Sammelband,* fols. Kv., K3r.

24 *Tischreden,* undated, *Dr. Martin Luther's Sämntliche Werke,* ed by J. G. Plockmann *et al.* (67 vols.; Frankfurt and Erlangen; Heyder und Zimmer, 1829-1857), LVII, 66; Sermon on I. Cor. 15:35-38, *ibid.,* XIX, 114; Luther, *Von der Widertauffe an zwen Pfarherrn, Ein brieff* (Wittemberg: Georg Wachter, 1528), fol. E3r.

25 Heinrich Bullinger, *Der Widertöufferen vrsprung/ fürgang/ Secten/ wäsen* (Zürich: Froschower, 1561), p. 15b.

head and possibly on his breast. He was baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Afterwards he was admonished to remain dissociated from the world but still to consider himself a sinner, to obey God, and to follow the brotherhood. One formula from around 1528 required the candidate to confess his acceptance of most of the articles of the Apostles Creed.[26]

Rink's soteriological ideas were valid for most of Thuringian Anabaptism. To be sure, many of the captured brethren could not explain them as fully as he did. For most of them the matter was simple: the Lutherans separated salvation from good works and thereby destroyed a God-ordained unity. Simple men like the two captured outside Erbe's cell in Eisenach in 1537 assumed without any question that ethics and soteriology were inseparable. Thus they held that the preacher whose life was sinful could not possibly proclaim the truth; Christians should not listen to sermons from such a man. They even went so far as to say that the death of Christ had no validity for the individual who did not imitate Christ in purity of life.[27]

The group in Central Hesse, i.e., Tasch, Schnabel, and others, added a new dimension to the controversy on faith and works. Before their hearing in 1538 they were given Lutheran literature to read in jail, including Melanchthon's *Loci*. They rejected his doctrine, and one of the reasons they gave was that it damned anyone who believed salvation was possible on the basis of his own works. Did they believe that man was saved because of his good works? There is more than a hint of such belief in this and similar statements.[28]

Anabaptist refusal to separate faith and works meant for a few the achievement of perfection through the purification experience of baptism; whatever they did after baptism could in no wise be reckoned as sin. The followers of the "Prophet" believed this,[29] and certainly the libertines in the camp of Hans Krug must have held the same view. Rink's successor at Sorga, Hans Bott, was reported to have believed that the flesh was not evil; this sounds like

26 See the discussion in Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp. 469-470; the formula printed in Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 305; Rink's formula (exclusive of the baptismal act itself) in Menius, *Der Widdertauffer*, fols. E2v.-E3r.; a truncated version of Römer's practice in testimony of Hans Lodewig, December 19, 1527, in Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 262. The brethren around Römer began the service with wine and ended with a tankard of beer.

27 Testimony of Köhler and Scheffer, November 12, 1537, in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, p. 197.

28 See Peter Lose testimony, 1538, in *TA, Hesse*, p. 191. Also Bucer-Schnabel dispute, 1538, in Hochhuth, *op. cit.* (1858), 631. Schnabel declared that Melanchthon said in a visitation report that teaching on repentance had been neglected. Lose quoted from the *Loci*, "vermaledeiet seie der, so us eigen werken vermeint selig zu werden." I could not find this in the *Loci* although there are statements similar in character and meaning.

29 Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 85.

a variation on the same theme.[30] For the majority of Thuringian Anabaptists, however, the opinion prevailed that one remained a sinner as long as he lived in mortal flesh.

On baptism there was little of consequence beyond what Rink, or his followers testifying specifically to his doctrine, had said. The most important difference between Rink and some of the other Anabaptists was on the relative importance of the various reasons for initiating believers' baptism. Rink emphasized in baptism the bond of the believer with Christ, to follow Christ in life and suffering. Hut's followers in Franconia and other Anabaptists in Thuringia emphasized the union *(Bund)* of the baptized. The Bund meant different things to different persons. Caspar Spiegel von Ostheim and the Aurachsmüller, both disciples of Hut, spoke of baptism as the sign of the Bund of those who would reign after the Turkish demolition of the European political structure.[31] Did this Bund constitute a union of potential revolutionaries? This was always the crucial question for the interrogating officials, whenever they uncovered talk of a Bund. This question can be answered however only in the context of individual Anabaptists' views on revolution. In one instance, the trial of the revered Anabaptist apostle Alexander, the authorities were obviously fishing for evidence of a revolutionary conspiracy in the Bund for the baptized. Alexander firmly denied such intent.[32] But for some of the early Franconian disciples of Hut, such denial would have been difficult to make.

For some Anabaptists baptism was a part of their eschatological thought. In a fanatic like Römer baptism into the Bund was a prelude to greater things; the act opened the eyes of the person baptized. Through dreams and visions the believer would be enabled to see and predict in detail the cataclysmic events of the near future. God would most assuredly reveal to His own the coming judgment.[33] But even the more moderate Anabaptists interpreted the act as an entrance into the Bund of those whom God would especially protect during the imminent punishment of the world. Fritz Erbe believed that God's judgment would break furiously over the world in the form of an army striking unheralded and unexpected by all except

30 I find it difficult to believe that a man so close to Rink could have taught this kind of libertinism. The Hutterite charges are not always consistent or clear. In their letter to Mathes in 1538 they accused Bott and his people of believing that human flesh was not sinful but the flesh of Christ was sinful. Bott was accused in addition of spiritualism, which sounds much more likely. None of these charges was carried in the Hutterite Chronicle. Rather they accused Bott there of denying the existence of devils and angels. Bott was obviously the object of an attempt at defamation. It is also clear, however, that there was genuine difference of doctrine between Bott's Thuringian Anabaptism and that of the Hutterites. (See *TA, Hesse,* p. 181; Chronicle in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 103, n. 5.)

31 Testimony in Berbig, *DZK,* XIII (1903), 309-310.

32 Testimony printed in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 349.

33 *Ibid.,* pp. 39-40.

the baptized, whom the Lord would preserve.[34] One senses here the pious expectancy of a persecuted flock, reading the Old Testament accounts of Israel's deliverances by Jehovah, eagerly awaiting the promised return of their vindicating Lord. Believers' baptism was the act of initiation into fellowship with the Lord's people.

Soteriology and baptism lead to a third problem: the place and work of the Spirit in the life of the Christian. It touches our treatment of Anabaptist theology at numerous places, the most important of which are the process of salvation already discussed and the problem of ultimate authority in Christianity. Rink's interpretation of man's reconciliation with God laid more weight on the free course of the Spirit than did Luther's interpretation of justification.[35] The Spirit had to move the individual, else one could not properly speak of reconciliation with God. Rink characterized Lutheran faith as dead because he thought justification was a formalistic act which hampered the Spirit. When the Spirit worked in an individual it produced fruit in the form of holiness of life and conduct. Precisely because the Lutherans did not exhibit holiness of life and conduct, as Rink required, he was certain that the Spirit had not moved. But if Rink believed in a free Spirit, he also limited that freedom by an insistent reliance on the Spirit's adherence to Scripture; i.e., the Spirit did not act contrary to Scripture. How then did Rink interpret Scripture? A detailed analysis of his exegetical principles is impossible owing to the absence of substantial writings and exegetical works from his pen. Several observations, however, can be made.

Rink's rejection of the real presence in the Lord's Supper was based on a more spiritualistic exegesis of Scripture than was Luther's affirmation of the real presence. Rink taught that the body of the Lord was no more bound or contained in the sanctified bread than it was in any other created thing. God was everywhere present. Rink did not preach pantheism, however. He intended the argument on divinity in created things purely as a negative one: to deny a unique presence of Christ in the Host. The true presence, and thus the true Lord's Supper, was the itinerant mission of the proclamation of the good news, from house to house. This the apostles had done. Only

34 Testimony of Erbe, October 9-11, 1531, printed in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, p. 139. Erbe did not scornfully reject infant baptism in the customary Anabaptist manner. He was inclined to be tolerant on the point. He thought the individual should decide for himself, when he came to an understanding of God, whether he wanted baptism as a believer or wanted to remain with only baptism as an infant (*Ibid.*, p. 138). Rink was too furiously opposed to infant baptism to have made such a concession.

35 Rink never wrote or spoke on the subject of the Spirit as such; it is therefore difficult to reconstruct a doctrine of the Spirit for him. Luther was influenced profoundly by mysticism and spiritualism, particularly in the *Theologia Deutsch*. Some of his statements sound very spiritualistic.

in preaching the gospel could the life-giving power of the Spirit be loosed; this was the true bread. Rink relied on the sixth chapter of the Fourth Gospel for his view.[36]

In his exposition of one passage in the Sermon on the Mount, which most Anabaptists interpreted quite literally, Rink added an allegorical interpretation. One of his followers, testifying on the question of Rink's attitude toward the exercise of justice, gave the usual literalistic view of Matt. 5:40: "And if a man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also"; i.e., the Christian must expect injustice. But Rink found more than an example to be followed literally. The coat stood for all temporal goods, the cloak for life itself. The Christian must be willing to surrender both his goods and his life.[37]

But Rink was adamantly literalistic on at least those Scriptures which touched baptism. Infant baptism was wrong because it denied the sequence given in Scripture. Baptism must necessarily follow faith, and faith is impossible in infants.[38] Throughout the argument on baptism, Rink thought in terms of a literal interpretation of Scripture. He buttressed his charge against infant baptism in the 1528 hearing with a large array of Scriptural quotations, and demanded that any attempt to refute his argument must be based on sufficient Scripture. Scripture stood as final authority.[39]

Rink was literalistic in his interpretation of Scripture on marriage. No matter how unpleasant and unnatural his situation was, he could not consent to a legal alteration because divorce was forbidden by Scripture. One senses here not only literalism but also legalism: certain New Testament Scriptures comprised a new set of rules on conduct replacing those of the Old Testament; the wrath of God would surely descend on him who transgressed.[40]

What then was final authority for Rink: Spirit or Scripture? Rink's interpretations ran the range from spiritualism to legalism. Authority was not an either-or proposition to him. Authority was Scripture always; but it was also a lively Scripture, one in which the Spirit moved. Indeed, otherwise it would have been no authority at all. This is, to be sure, an evasion; but the question of authority was never put to him directly. Behind it one must recognize the earnestness of a man who believed Spirit and Scripture could be, indeed must be, combined in a manner different from that of Luther,

36 Testimony of Heinz Ot, 1531, in Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 331.
37 *Ibid.*
38 See above, n. 21.
39 Hearing of 1528, in *TA, Hesse*, pp. 11-12, 9; letter of Rink to Eberhard, *c.* 1530, *ibid.*, p. 31.
40 Rink's defense of his marriage views, 1531, *ibid.*, pp. 34, 35.

who quenched the Spirit. There was unquestionably a strong personal element in what Rink appeared to regard as objective Scripture. Because God, through the Spirit, spoke with a certain directness to him in the Scripture, Scripture became authoritative to him. Like the Reformers, he had the bland conviction that his interpretation of the Scripture was the correct one.[41] He demanded from his opponents not only "sufficient Scripture" to disprove his views on infant baptism, but also "unfalsified Scripture."[42] There is nothing in the records to indicate that he relied on extra-Scriptural revelations in visions, or dreams, or writings on the heart.[43]

Other Thuringian Anabaptists did rely on dreams. The "Prophet" and Römer believed in and utilized extra-Scriptural revelations.[44] Jacob Storger, a Mülhausen Anabaptist who was tried and executed in 1537, admitted the validity of dreams which touched the Gospel, as he put it. Storger also used the Inner Word as a touchstone for doctrine.[45] One sees here only the reliance on the subjective elements, without explanation as to the extent of their use, the kind and number of persons to whom they were vouchsafed, or the possible limitations of such media through Scripture. A similar inadequacy of information attends the record of one Kunne Zinderlin, whose choice of the Anabaptist way was verified for her by a voice.[46]

Another expression of spiritualism can be found in the ideas of the three Anabaptists caught conversing with Erbe in 1539. On the

41 See H. Fast and J. H. Yoder, "How to Deal with Anabaptists: An Unpublished Letter of Heinrich Bullinger," *MQR,* XXXIII (1959), 83-95, for an example of one Reformer's ideas on how to interpret Scripture.

42 Hearing of 1528, in *TA, Hesse,* p. 9.

43 Zur Linden (*op. cit.,* pp. 176-178) sees Rink as a mystic in soteriology and a complete spiritualist in authority. But zur Linden relies on Raidt's formulation of Rink's soteriology, without reference to Rink's qualification and refutation of parts of it. Thus Rink is purported to believe in a salvation process which originated in man's own power: man could bring himself to the Spirit of God. Rink denied flatly that he ever taught salvation in any way through one's own power, a denial in direct response to the statement which zur Linden uses (*TA, Hesse,* pp. 5-6, 7). Zur Linden also relies on Menius to say that Rink declared that all books of the New Testament in all languages—Greek, Latin, German, etc.—were false; no true Scripture existed on earth any more (Menius, *Von dem Geist der Widerteuffer* [Wittemberg: Nickel Schirlentz, 1544] fol. Jv.). If Rink actually said this, and Menius declared he had heard him personally, it is in complete contradiction to his practice of regarding Scripture as authoritative. It is inconceivable that a man who rejected Scripture completely would quote it as frequently as Rink did, or would bother with it at all. Menius did not make the charge in his 1530 book. Only in 1544, after the Lutheran picture of Anabaptism as excessively subjective had become well fixed, did he make the charge. Perhaps Menius, reflecting on the configuration of his charge of Anabaptist rejection of Scripture, recalled a 1525 attitude of Rink, a practice which he followed on other occasions. It is significant that he referred to Müntzer's reliance on the Spirit and rejection of Scripture immediately prior to the charge against Rink. It is convenient to handle Rink as a mystic and spiritualist; but a closer examination of his ideas discloses too many uncomfortable contradictions to a mystic or spiritualist position. These require explanation which zur Linden does not give.

44 For the "Prophet," see Wappler, *Thüringen,* pp. 81ff. For Römer, *ibid.,* p. 40.

45 Storger hearing, October 12, 1537, printed *ibid.,* p. 429.

46 Trial at Frankenhausen, January 30, 1530, printed *ibid.,* p. 314. She was baptized by Hans Hut. The Hutterites charged Hans Bott with a spiritualism which included a reliance on dreams as revelations. I am inclined to concede the charge of spiritualism in the area of Scriptural interpretation in the case of Bott. But the rest of the evidence is too questionable.

one hand they admitted—probably as the result of some argumentation with Menius—that the Christian's knowledge of God must derive from the Scriptures. Nevertheless the Spirit for them was capable of instructing quite without Scripture. Obviously they insisted that Scripture, which taught about God, must be interpreted by the Spirit; Scripture by itself was a dead letter.[47] For these men marriage, too, was primarily a spiritual affair. A truly spiritual union lasted through eternity, and contrasted sharply with the inadequacies of a purely fleshly union.[48] The records give no clue as to what direction their marriage views took.

The spiritualism of Erbe's friends of 1539 is all the more impressive because of its contrast to the literalism of Köhler and Scheffer, who visited him in 1537. They adhered to a literal rendition of Matthew's account of the sending out of the twelve on a healing ministry. "Freely ye have received; freely give" (Matt. 10:8) meant that a minister should not receive wages for his labor; he was to live from charity. The Sermon on the Mount was also to be literally understood and obeyed. With these men there was no trace of excessive spiritualizing, at least according to Menius.[49]

Hessian Anabaptism inherited some of Melchior Hofmann's spiritualization of the Incarnation. Christ's humanity did not derive from His mother, Mary. Schnabel argued that Christ's spirit became flesh, but he did not provide a satisfactory explanation of the origin of Christ's humanity. Together with this spiritualizing Schnabel placed a heavy reliance on Scripture, citing it often in the manner of one who assumed it to be of decisive authority.[50] The Anabaptists in general accepted the Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura,* but differed from the Reformers on its interpretation. In Central Germany they insisted on putting both a more spiritualistic and at the same time a more literalistic construction on it than the Reformers did.

An indissoluble part of repentance and salvation for the Anabaptists was their insistence on newness of life in the regenerated Christian. For them, faith manifested itself in holiness of life, else it was not faith but hypocrisy. Again and again the Anabaptists told their interrogators that they rejected the new Evangelical teaching precisely because it did not induce its adherents to abstain from sin in all forms; it could not be true. Adam Angersbach in Rink's Sorga

47 Hearing printed in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* pp. 203, 204.

48 Heinz Kraut and others captured at Kleineutersdorf and interrogated by Melanchthon in 1535 held a similar position. *Corpus Reformatorum,* II, 1001-1002.

49 Hearing 1537, in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* pp. 197-198.

50 "Verantwortung," *TA, Hesse,* pp. 165-180, *passim,* especially pp. 171-173.

congregation considered the wickedness of the people greater after the new teaching than it had been under the papacy. He was attracted to Rink and his followers because they made an earnest effort to abstain from sin; one found purity of life among them. He was certain therefore that they had the Spirit.[51] Brother Adrian in the Harz region cried to God in anguish at the enormity of the sin around him and God in His infinite mercy led him to the Anabaptist brotherhood.[52] This insistence on purity of life and conduct has appropriately been called discipleship.[53] What did discipleship mean to the Anabaptists?

Discipleship meant in the first place separation from the world. He who would not separate from the wickedness around him was not worthy to bear the name of Christ. The Anabaptists decried the gluttony, drunkenness, cursing, and vice in all forms around them; and they were especially indignant when such conduct touched the lives of the Lutheran pastors. True Christianity was always identical with spiritual fruit in the form of an earnest repudiation of the sins of the world. "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. 7:16)[54]

Discipleship meant a community life in which the sharing of material goods was the accepted practice. Yet these Anabaptists did not practice community of goods.[55] They meant that sharing with the brother in need was done so frequently as to make it virtually impossible for one to call his own goods strictly private. The only absolute for them in this respect was the lordship of God over everything; because of that lordship strictly private property was nonexistent.[56] In their practice of sharing there was something of a leveler attitude; they regarded riches with scorn. He who was rich must distribute to those who were less fortunate. In one instance an unfavorable contrast was made with Lutheranism which, in one broth-

51 Testimony, 1531, in Wappler, *Thüringen,* pp. 328-329.

52 Jacobs, *op. cit.,* p. 485. Hans Hut declared at his trial that dissatisfaction with the ethics at Wittenberg led him to seek a faith different from that of the Lutherans (Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 26).

53 Harold S. Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision," *MQR,* XVIII (1944), 67-88.

54 This point needs no further elaboration. It is implicit and explicit in the numerous Anabaptist complaints against Lutheranism. See the testimonies of Angersbach and Adrian, cited above. See the hearing of Otilia Goldschmidt (or Rüdigern) for an example of an Anabaptist call to repentance from the sin of the world (December 7, 1537, printed in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 456).

55 Berka hearing, July 1533 (Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens.* pp. 168-176, *passim*). Brethren have a right, they said, to the goods of other brethren. But they did not pool all their material resources and live a communal life. At the Sorga hearing, August 1533 (*TA, Hesse,* pp. 64-69, *passim*), the Anabaptists could not clearly answer the question on private property. Their confusion came obviously from a practice of sharing so frequently that one could not in truth say his goods were his own. Yet private property was not forbidden, technically. One must remember that the Sorga group under Bott had the greatest difficulty accepting the absolute community of goods of the Hutterites during their Moravian sojourn.

56 They used the same grounds to refuse to obey any sentence of banishment. This is the direction of the Koch testimony (Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* p. 174).

er's eyes, was all too tolerant of its rich extorting even more from its poor.[57]

Discipleship also meant suffering. Just as Christ had suffered, so must the true Christian inevitably endure suffering and the cross. When it came one was assured that he was following the truth.[58] Rink expected to seal his faith with his life.[59] One of his followers declared that he recognized Rink's teaching as true because it was attended by suffering.[60] At the moment of execution Anabaptists spoke of their joy at being able thus to testify for their Lord.[61] For the most part Thuringian Anabaptism did not develop a martyr complex. Death at the hands of the world did not become a part of the salvation process. On the contrary, many recanted, including some of those closest to Rink, whose ideas were most typically Anabaptist.[62] One suspects that their recantation was the result both of fear and the realization that Philip released those who recanted in his lands. This practice came to be condemned by the Anabaptists.[63] Of course there were many Anabaptists in Thuringia who suffered martyrdom.

Discipleship further meant nonresistance, the repudiation of the Christian's participation in war, even in the classic Augustinian just war, on the grounds that killing even in self-defense was sinful. On this point the Thuringian Anabaptist voice was not unified. The brethren were interrogated extensively on the question, always in reference to their attitude toward civil authority. Indeed, the civil servants who handled the questioning regarded the topic as political, not religious. It was overemphasized in the hearings because the authorities were naturally anxious to ferret out and destroy anything that might lead to a renewed peasant uprising. The Anabaptists were repeatedly accused of having been participants in the Peasants' Revolt. They were accused of teaching sedition and fostering revolution. They were tortured in an effort to induce them to confess their true motvies, and to reveal the names of other persons who might harbor seditious intentions. Against this onslaught of accusation the Anabaptists were hard pressed to clear themselves; they

57 So Schnabel in "Verantwortung," *TA, Hesse,* pp. 174-175. For other testimony on this issue see Alexander, in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 349; Heinz Ot on Rink, *ibid.,* p. 330; Köhler and Scheffer, in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* p. 198; the trio caught in 1539, *ibid.,* p. 204.

58 This is what Ot meant when he spoke of suffering unjustly (Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 330). The Anabaptists undoubtedly had Matt. 5:10-12 in mind when they spoke on the point.

59 Hearing of 1528, *TA, Hesse,* p. 6.

60 Angersbach, in Wappler, *Thuringen,* p. 329.

61 For example, see Hans Heutrock testimony, January 17, 1538, *ibid.,* p. 456.

62 So Angersbach and Ot, *ibid.,* pp. 330, 331.

63 Hans Bott remonstrated with Hans Quinger the Elder for the latter's recantation. This was an act against the Heavenly Father. Quinger did not recant the second time. Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* p. 140.

never succeeded in convincing the authorities that matters of civil obedience were essentially matters of conscience, of Christian conviction, to them. An examination of their view on civil obedience is in order at this point.

The principal source of information on Rink's attitude toward civil authority is Eberhard von der Thann's report to Philip of Hesse in March 1532. Eberhard's avowed purpose for writing was to induce Philip to execute the recently captured leader of the Anabaptists.[64] He therefore set about to picture Rink in the blackest possible colors as a long-standing revolutionary from whom no reform could be expected; the report is full of exaggeration. Eberhard's stated reasons for declaring the prisoner to be a revolutionary were as follows: (1) Rink was an open instigator of the Peasants' War, a leader second only to Müntzer and Pfeiffer, who never repented of his activity. (2) He left his wife in order to propagate rebaptism. (3) He propagated rebaptism secretly despite the absence of a Scriptural basis for the act. (4) He taught that there should be no civil authority. (5) He taught that no Christian should or could be a magistrate. (6) He taught that the congregation should install, or recall, the minister (or magistrate). (7) He persistently refused to desist from teaching these doctrines despite the earnest commands of the civil authorities.[65]

The fourth charge was by far the most serious one. Eberhard qualified it, however, by observing that Rink had ceased proclaiming it since the Peasants' War. Eberhard listed it because he considered Rink's new line, that no Christian could be a magistrate, the same idea as Rink's earlier injunction against all civil authority.[66] Eberhard's confusion and alarm on these points can be laid to his inability to understand Anabaptist ethics. Rink was not saying that the contemporary princes should not serve as magistrates; i.e., that they should either resign or be forcibly expelled from office. He was

64 Eberhard to Elector John, November 25, 1531, *ibid.*, pp. 145-146. Philip of Hesse did not find Eberhard's proof of Rink's revolutionary intentions very convincing. He insisted on regarding Rink as a man badly mistaken in matters that were purely religious; he was guilty of blasphemy, but he was not seditious (Philip to Elector John, January 3, 1532, *ibid.*, p. 155). No mention was made of seditious ideas at Rink's hearing of 1528.

65 Printed in Wappler, *Thüringen*, pp. 333-336. "Gemeine" in Point 6 can of course be community. I have chosen to translate it congregation because Rink's thought was much more religious than political. This should not be construed to mean that Rink was advocating a form of political democracy. Rink probably meant that the congregation should exercise the power of call and recall over its minister.

66 It is not easy to disentangle the meaning from Eberhard's prose. ". . . so hat itztgedachter Rinck, man soll keine obrigkeit haben, volgends aber, als er den armen einfeltigen dieses aus dem, das sie furnemlich umb diesen und dergleichen artickeln in vergangenem paurischen aufrur seint gestraft worden, nicht hat unvermarkt der aufrur einbilden mogen, an des stat, ein christ soll oder moge kein oberherr sein, item die gemeine sol dieselbige zusetzen und entsetzen haben, wilchs zweierlei rede und ein meinung, zwu hosen und eines tuchs ist, offentlich geleret" (*ibid.*, p. 334). I have interpreted this much as zur Linden did, except for the different consequences. Zur Linden considered Rink to be a revolutionary (zur Linden, *op. cit.*, p. 178).

rather saying that since they were magistrates they were not Christians. It was common Anabaptist belief that the office of the sword was denied to the Christian.

Rink denied outright that he was an instigator of the Peasants' War.[67] The charge of disobedience he could not deny. He did say that one should disobey government when it commanded that which was contrary to the commands of God. Since Rink, like Luther, considered himself divinely commissioned to preach the Word, the command to cease teaching and baptizing was for him directly contrary to God's commands. The remaining charges were insignificant. Rink's ideas, as derived from Eberhard's report, were revolutionary in the sense that they were radical, but not in the sense of constituting a plot to overthrow the existing government. Eberhard, however, put the latter construction on them.

Rink had another reason for thinking that civil authority was unchristian. It not only used the sword; it even wielded it against Christians, in a manner that could only be labeled as persecution. He objected to being called a revolutionary and a *Schwärmer* by false prophets who did not know what they were talking about. They induced the civil authority to use murder, robbery and imprisonment against the children of God. It was inconceivable that a true Christian could kill God's people in the righteous exercise of a God-ordained office. Such acts were those of antichrist. Rink held a very low opinion of the magistrates of his time.[68] As a Christian he felt himself compelled to speak the prophetic word of warning to the magistracy. To punish unjustly was to abuse one's ordination from God, the consequences of which were eternal.[69] His ideas on how the Christian should act toward civil authority were typically Anabaptist within the nonresistant tradition. He insisted that one must obey civil authority, as long as it did not demand that which was contrary to God's commands. The Christian must perforce suffer persecution unjustly. If one's coat was unjustly confiscated, the Christian should freely surrender his cloak too. No Christian could sue at law.[70] One cannot escape the conclusion that Rink had changed radically since his Peasants' War days.

Anabaptism in its early days in Franconia presented a mixed position on the question of the attitude toward government. The

67 Letter to Eberhard, *c.* 1530, *TA, Hesse,* p. 31. He did not deny his participation in it.

68 Rink developed a bitter attitude toward the magistrates; this bitterness could have been inspired by peasant grievances before and during the Peasants' Revolt. But Rink's experiences with magistrates after 1528 intensified the feeling if it existed earlier. See the bitterness in his tract on baptism in *Sammelband,* fols. K2v.-K3r.

69 Letter to Eberhard, *c.* 1530, *TA, Hesse,* p. 31.

70 Heinz Ot on Rink, in Wappler, *Thüringen,* pp. 330-331.

movement in Franconia was the result of Hut's missionary work. Hut's mature views on revolution and rebellion are clear enough: the Christian must be completely nonresistant.[71] But what he taught in the summer of 1526 immediately after his conversion, and how his ideas were received and understood by the many who had participated a year earlier in the Peasants' War—these questions are more difficult to answer. One finds among his followers advocates for Christian nonresistance and advocates for civil insurrection. Caspar Spiegel von Ostheim and his brother Thomas both confessed that the Anabaptists were to help in extirpating the princes after the Turks should have destroyed the flower of the German chivalry in a cataclysmic battle. Thomas did so only after torture. Beutelhans and Wolf Schreiner, members of the same group with the Spiegel brothers, denied the right of Anabaptists to participate in the slaughter. They agreed that the slaughter was to come soon. Beutelhans went so far as to say that those among them who had participated in the Peasants' War had erred.[72] One cannot explain this inconsistency on grounds of pre-torture and post-torture differences in testimony, as Hege does.[73] These differences are clear only in the case of Thomas Spiegel. It seems more reasonable to explain them on other grounds. Hut and his fellow preachers visited their converts rarely. The converts lacked adequate instruction. Some of them, placing Hut's pronounced eschatology against the background of the recent revolt, advocated a fresh rebellion in connection with the awaited Turkish visitation. Others got some teaching from Hut forbidding the use of the sword and retained that idea despite torture.

One of the strangest mixtures of revolution and nonresistance was found in Hans Römer and his followers. Their baptism customarily concluded with admonitions to the new brother to live a good Christian life and to abstain from revolution. Yet the group, with Römer fully in league if not in command, once conceived an elaborate plot for the forcible overthrow of the city government of Erfurt and were proceeding with its execution when they were discovered. Here were Anabaptists completely carried away by their own eschatology.[74]

71 Klassen, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-81.

72 Testimony in Berbig, *DZK*, XIII, 309-316, *passim;* and in Wappler, *Thüringen*, pp. 228-235.

73 Hege, "Königsberg," *ME*, III, 220. Hege refers to a later hearing conducted by a different civil officer, without torture, where the Anabaptists recanted their earlier statements which they had made for fear of the rack. While it is true that Caspar Spiegel appeared at this hearing, it is not at all clear that he was one who recanted. Beutelhans, Wolf Schreiner, and the Aurachsmüller did retract certain of their previous statements (Berbig, *DZK*, XIII, 335).

74 Wappler, *Thüringen*, pp. 38-44.

The rest of Thuringian Anabaptism presents a confused picture on the issue. Alexander, Erbe and Schnabel exemplify the usual Anabaptist position: nonresistance, obedience to civil authority, and no Christian could serve as a magistrate.[75] Others, like Margareta Koch or Erbe's visitors of 1539, present other views. Koch believed that princes universally had usurped more power than God intended them to have. The three friends of Erbe held much the same view; namely that the civil authorities behaved as Pilate toward Christ. They believed Christians had no need for government at all. Such views had religious roots like those of Rink: no government had the right as an agent of God to persecute His children. But there were also social-economic roots. Koch felt that the abused peasants had a right to raise the banner of revolt in the Peasants' War. All material goods belonged to the Lord and should not be withheld from the many by the few.[76] On his way to the executioner's block at Jena, Heinz Kraut quoted the social revolutionary jingle of John Ball and the German Peasants' War: "When Adam delved and Eva span, who then was the gentleman?"[77] Clearly Anabaptism presented no unified set of ideas on the Christian's attitude toward the civil order. The disunity can probably be attributed to insufficient instruction and the all-pervasive influence of the Peasants' War among the lower classes from which Anabaptism drew much of its membership.

The best illustration of this confusion and disunity can be found in the testimony of around twenty-five members of the Sorga congregation in 1533. To a relatively simple question as to whether or not a Christian ought to go to war, they achieved a unified no. They could not answer so unequivocally the question whether the Peasants' War was right or wrong. Some of them declared it ungodly; others thought it justified; still others did not know. The most difficult question for them was whether or not a Christian could admit the right of civil authority to rule him. One thought that government was necessary and that a Christian serving in government could in good conscience execute thieves. Another ruled out capital punishment, but not the right of a government to exercise judgment. A third believed the existence of government was permissible but that it should never wage war or call up its people to kill for any purpose. Others were not sure enough to answer. Most of them believed government should be obeyed except when conscience for-

75 Of the three, Schnabel gives the fullest report: "Verantwortung," *TA, Hesse,* pp. 169-170; Erbe, in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* p. 139; Alexander, in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 348; and Jacobs, *op. cit.,* pp. 479-481.

76 Koch testimony, July 21, 1533, in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* p. 174.

77 Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 417. "Da Adam reute und Eva spann, wer war die Zeit ein Edelmann?"

bade obedience. This question on civil authority was too tricky; they did not understand its implications.[78] Nonresistance—revolution; obedience to government—no government at all; Thuringian Anabaptism had not fully made up its mind.

The interrogators of Anabaptists sometimes put the questions of oath-swearing and suits at law into the category of articles which could be labeled seditious. Thuringian Anabaptists generally condemned the oath as unnecessary and sinful. Christ had commanded a simple yes or no in the speech of His followers.[79] Occasionally an Anabaptist admitted that perhaps the civil oath was not forbidden by Christ.[80] In the one instance when the question of lawsuits was raised, the Anabaptists condemned the practice for the Christian.[81]

On Christological and Trinitarian issues Anabaptist hands were generally clean, apart from the docetic view of the Incarnation obtained from Melchior Hofmann.[82] This doctrine was widely spread geographically, but it was not supported by all Anabaptists in any given area. Peter Pestel, who worked from Austria to Zwickau, in 1536; Erbe's Anabaptist friends of 1536; possibly Hans Bott; these in addition to the Schnabel-Tasch group in Central Hesse accepted the doctrine.[83] All attempts to prove Trinitarian heresy against captured Anabaptists failed. On one occasion Alexander accepted the idea of the Trinity without question.[84] In general, the nontheologically minded Anabaptists were not aware of the existence of either a Trinitarian[85] or a Christological problem.

Rink was well aware of a distinction between the two natures of Christ. He posited Christ's agony in Gethsemane as a struggle between flesh and spirit in which the ultimate victory went to the spirit. Raidt tried to interpret this as a declaration of Christ's disobedience in the flesh, and therefore in essence to God. Rink denied the charge. Later Raidt attempted to interpret Rink's ideas as a denial of Christ's divinity; Christ was a created being, and therefore

78 Sorga hearing, in *TA, Hesse,* pp. 64-69, *passim.*

79 For example, Köhler and Scheffer, 1537, in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* p. 198.

80 Schnabel's "Verantwortung," *TA, Hesse,* p. 171.

81 Köhler and Scheffer, in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* p. 198.

82 For an explanation of this view, see zur Linden, *op. cit.,* pp. 286-291. Menno Simons defended the same view. (See I. E. Burkhardt, "Menno Simons on the Incarnation," *MQR,* IV [1930], 178-202.) Hofmann and Menno held that Christ became flesh *in* Mary but not *of* Mary. His flesh was somewhat spiritualized.

83 Pestel, in Wappler, *Inquisition und Ketzerprozesse,* pp. 78-79; Erbe friends, Schultheiss Ley to Elector John Frederick, July 9, 1539, in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* p. 206; Bott in Letter of Elders of Moravia to Mathes, 1538, *TA, Hesse,* p. 181. The 1539 friends of Erbe also denied the resurrection of the flesh, both in Christ and subsequently in everyone. The resurrection was only spiritual (Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* pp. 203-204).

84 Hearing, 1533, in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 349.

85 So the Kleineutersdorf Anabaptists interrogated by Melanchthon (*CR,* II, 998).

less than God. Again Rink insisted he did not depart from orthodox Christian thought on Christological matters.[86]

On the Lord's Supper Rink opposed both Lutherans and Catholics by denying the presence of Christ's body and blood in the elements. The doctrine of the real presence was idolatry; it was an attempt to fashion an image of God out of created materials. This much is clear from the hearing of 1528 and the testimony of his disciples.[87] What is not clear is Rink's idea of the purpose of the ceremony, having repudiated the real presence. He was reported to have likened the communion to the preaching of the Gospel; this was the true communion because it handled the true word of life as in John 6.[88] Rink's reference to apostolic practice in this connection led zur Linden to say that Rink taught the communion in the daily breaking of bread, any bread, among the believers.[89] This may well have been the case. But the records give small basis for any positive concept of the Lord's Supper in Rink's thought. He regarded it as a great mystery and of secondary value in Christian doctrine. Only those individuals well along in their faith should receive instruction on it.[90] Perhaps Rink said little about it because most of his work was to dispense milk rather than meat.

An examination of the statements of other Anabaptists in Central Germany is of little help in reconstructing their observance of the Lord's Supper. One finds a variety of reasons for opposing the real presence: Christ was in heaven and therefore could not be in the elements; the elements tasted and smelled like wine and bread; the real presence was idolatry. But the nearest approach to a positive doctrine paralleled Rink's in kind: he who followed Christ in holiness of life truly ate and drank Christ.[91] It was spiritualized in this instance.

Of all the available sources Menius gives the fullest account of general Anabaptist practice in the celebration of the Lord's Supper in Central Germany. They used the service as a sign of love and brotherly unity. They began their celebration of communion with a sermon on brotherly love. They admonished one another on Christian behavior and charity to the brother. After reading Romans 12 they ate and drank the bread and wine. All those who participated were part of the true body of Christ. But the service symbolized more: it symbolized the suffering inevitable for the Christian. Hence the

86 Hearing of 1528, *TA, Hesse,* pp. 5, 7, 10.
87 *Ibid.,* pp. 5, 6-7, 9; Ot testimony, 1531, in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 331.
88 *Ibid.*
89 Zur Linden, *op. cit.,* p. 177.
90 Testimony of Hans Werner, 1531, in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 331.
91 Berka hearing, printed in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* pp. 168-176, *passim,*

Anabaptists celebrated it when they thought they were about to be caught or punished in the expectation that it would strengthen them for the ordeal.[92]

Another element of Thuringian Anabaptist thought that requires our attention is its eschatology. This appeared in vigorous form as an integral part of the appeal of the new movement in its earliest days. The Anabaptists in Franconia were harangued with Hut's opinions of the time and manner of approach of the end time. Hut taught his followers that the Turks would engage the political leaders of Christendom in a decisive battle near Nürnberg, in which most of Germany's princes and lords would be destroyed; the remaining few would be destroyed later, either by the Turks or, as some Anabaptists said, by the Anabaptists themselves. The Lord would then come to rule the world with his Anabaptist helpers.[93]

Echoes of this theme can be found in Anabaptism throughout Central Germany in succeeding years among both moderate and radical elements. Erbe spoke of a huge army bringing the Judgment at midnight.[94] Hans Bott proclaimed much the same in his early ministry.[95]. Margarete Koch held fervently to the conviction that the princes who slaughtered the peasants in 1525 would receive their reward in the pending visitation of the Lord.[96] Hans Römer developed his eschatology in fantastic detail with the help of John's Revelation: heaven would rain grasshoppers to devour the unbaptized (i.e., non-Anabaptists). A strong wind would destroy most of the remaining offenders. Finally the faithful were expected to restore Jerusalem, and for this Römer and his people devised a plot to capture Erfurt. He anticipated help from Zwingli and Oecolampadius against the Lutherans.[97] Römer's exaggerated eschatology is the best available explanation for the contradiction between his avowed nonresistance and his assistance in the attempt to seize Erfurt by force. There was the equally fantastic expectancy of the "Prophet's" group for the immediate return of the Bridegroom.[98] All of this contrasted sharply with the moderate eschatology of the

92 Menius, *Der Widdertauffer,* fols. T3v.-T4v.

93 Hearing at Königsberg, 1527, which is given fully in Berbig, *DZK,* XIII, 309-316, *passim,* and Thomas Spiegel von Ostheim hearing, 1527, in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 231. Hut's eschatology was much more elaborate in the minds of the authorities. They were certain he designated the time: within three and a half years; and they believed he taught the participation of all Anabaptists in the final extirpation of the lords. These views do not agree with Hut's testimony in court, with his writings, or with the testimonies of the majority of his responsible followers who had more than a fleeting acquaintance with him. Hut agreed at the Martyrs' Synod in Augsburg, August 1527, to stop preaching eschatology of any sort. (See Klassen, *op. cit.,* pp. 71-74.)

94 Testimony, 1531, in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* p. 139.

95 Neff, "Hans Both," *ME,* I, 395.

96 Testimony, 1533, in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* p. 174.

97 Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 42.

98 *Ibid.,* p. 83.

Moravian Hutterites. They likewise awaited the return of the Lord, but for them His return was less predictable in time or relation to an historic occasion than it was in the thought of the Thuringians. It was less attached to the extirpation of political leaders. There was less desire to see the Lord's own vindicated here and now. The Hutterites looked with anticipation toward the Judgment, but emphasized the bliss of heaven.[99] Thuringian Anabaptism was born and nourished among a peasantry smarting from the defeat and butchery of the Peasants' War. It clamored for retribution, and sometimes was not willing to permit the Lord to vindicate His children in His own time and manner.

Finally there remains the question of congregational life and practice, particularly with respect to discipline. Anabaptism of the sixteenth century regarded the church as a brotherhood of the believers. The church was necessary and useful not only for worship and fellowship, but also for discipline. This implied the existence of a set of standards of faith which could be applied to individual members of the brotherhood. Did Thuringian Anabaptism possess such standards, and did it discipline its members? There are many evidences of attitudes which could be maintained only by the exercise of discipline. The Anabaptists experienced an enormous tension between themselves and the state church because of their emphatic rejection of the doctrines and practices of the state church. The conflict forced both sides to clarify and sharpen their doctrines. The Lutherans were better qualified than the Anabaptists for such a task. But how could the Anabaptists maintain their position against the use of persecution to force a return to the state church? The effort to maintain a unity of doctrine, despite intense conviction, would of necessity be an immense one if it were to succeed against the forces of opposition. The situation called for stern discipline.[100]

There are evidences of such a discipline, but the instances are surprisingly few and are found mostly outside the geographical center of Thuringian Anabaptism. Menius reported briefly on the use of the ban, presumably in the Thuringian Anabaptist heartland. They counseled with each other and practiced the ban against the sinning member before the observance of communion. They were especially careful to require repentance and confession of a member who had

99 Letter of the Elders of Moravia to Mathes, 1538, *TA, Hesse,* p. 180.

100 The necessity for discipline is as apparent in Rink's tract on baptism as it is anywhere in the records of Thuringian Anabaptism. Rink believed, as Luther did, that wherever true Christian doctrine and worship were established, the devil tried to invade in order to tear down and destroy the work of the Lord. He likened the body of believers to a flock of sheep who undertook the work of reform, driving out the wolves, lions, and bears, because the Protestant pastors, the sheep-dogs, refused to perform the task. (Tract on Baptism, *Sammelband,* fols. K2r.-K3r.)

recanted.[101] Other records on Western Thuringian Anabaptism's use of discipline are virtually nonexistent. In border regions there is more to be found. An Anabaptist of the Harz testified that they did not permit any lewd or unchaste person among them. A brother with a bad reputation was always investigated. Since gossip was forbidden among them, one can suppose that they were fair enough to judge an accused brother on the basis of good evidence. Another Anabaptist denied that a specified individual, a local miller, belonged to their brotherhood, on the grounds that the miller beat his wife.[102] These instances point unquestionably to the exercise of discipline. By far the best evidence is found in Central Hesse. In an argument with Bucer on why the Anabaptists separated from the state church, Georg Schnabel gave as one reason the state church's failure to practice the ban against a sinning member. He declared that Luther at one time wanted to establish a true church, presumably with discipline, but that he was unable to do so because he could not find enough of the right kind of people for it. Schnabel accused Luther of a lack of courage.[103] The group led by Schnabel and Tasch must have practiced the ban. But it is significant that it was precisely the leaders of this group who were induced to return to the state church, not without concessions of course on the practice of the ban in the state church.[104]

Within a given congregation in Anabaptism's geographical heartland one notices considerable variation in belief and understanding of faith and doctrine. Twelve persons including Rink were apprehended on November 11, 1531, at the house of Hans Werner at Vacha, having gathered to hear Rink preach. At the subsequent hearing three of them displayed an excellent grasp of Rink's thought and showed obvious signs of having had some in-

101 Menius, *Der Widdertauffer*, fol. T4r.

102 Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 485; Hochhuth, *op. cit.*, (1858), pp. 627-631.

103 The reference is undoubtedly to Luther's *Vorrede* to the *Deutsche Messe*, 1526, in *D. Martin Luther's Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Knaake, *et al.* (57 vols.; Weimar: Böhlau, 1883-1914) (hereafter *WA*), XIX, 75. Luther feared that separate secret conventicles of earnest Christians would develop factionalism in the church, to the detriment of the many who needed instruction. Schnabel overstated Luther's desire to found such a separated church.

104 One of the crucial areas in which discipline could have been exercised was that of mixed marriage. Could an Anabaptist consider his marriage to a non-Anabaptist a valid one? Generally the attitude prevailed that a mixed marriage was not valid. This meant in some instances that an Anabaptist deserted his non-Anabaptist spouse. See, for example, the tangled affair of Hans Zwinger the Younger, whose wife deserted him when he recanted (Berka hearing, 1533, Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, p. 172). It sometimes meant further that the Anabaptist partner could remarry, this time of course an Anabaptist. See the case of Georg Volck, in Marx Mayr's testimony, in Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 323; or the case of Adam Schwabe, Frankenhausen hearing, 1530, *ibid.*, p. 313. Volck was accused of teaching that wives should be had in common. He took a second one because his first one disagreed with him. Schwabe confessed to having two wives, the second of whom was an Anabaptist. Although there is evidence of marital problems, there is still no direct evidence of discipline administered by a congregation in a case of mixed marriage. There is even no evidence of congregational counsel on the matter.

struction from him. Two others were somewhat less well instructed. Of the remaining six, two disclaimed any relation to the movement except that of passing curiosity. The other four were bonafide Anabaptists, but either knew little about the faith or were not given an opportunity to display their knowledge. Two of the most ably instructed, Adam Angersbach and Heinz Ot, recanted on the ground that they were not absolutely sure Rink's teaching was correct. They were willing to receive instruction. Rink, needless to say, must have been discomfited. But what can one say about congregational life and discipline here? It is questionable that there existed at this place a congregation in the usual Anabaptist sense of the word. Their meeting on this occasion was for the purpose of evangelism. Rink spoke on baptism, undoubtedly within the context of individual salvation, in an effort to win new members. It was reported that their meetings during the previous summer were for the same purpose, and that they did not meet alone as a congregation.[105]

For the other congregations, such as Sorga or Berka, the evidence is not so clear one way or the other. Here again one finds substantial differences in degree of spiritual growth and understanding. The contrast is not so great as at Vacha, partly at least because the interrogations at Berka and Sorga in 1533 did not cover as broad a scope of doctrine.[106] It is interesting to observe differences in doctrine between the two groups of men apprehended while conversing with Fritz Erbe, in 1537 and 1539. These men probably had connections with the Berka group at least. The pair caught in 1537 were Scriptural literalists with what appears to be a traditional Anabaptist position against the use of force in war or at law. The trio of 1539 were spiritualists with an attitude toward government suspiciously like revolution.[107] Could these five men and Erbe have been in the same congregation if a consistent discipline had been exercised? For that matter, the rise in esteem of a man like Erbe, replacing somewhat, or at least standing beside, the veneration given to Rink by the rank and file Anabaptists, is significant. Erbe did not possess the fire of Rink in denouncing infant baptism and insisting on believers' baptism. Anabaptism had to maintain a vigorous sanction with respect to believers' baptism or fall prey to the blandishments of

105 The magistrate, Martin von der Thann, and Council of Vacha reported this in a letter to Philip, November 12, 1531. It is doubtful that the authorities could have known the exact character of all the Anabaptist meetings in Vacha during the preceding summer, but the generalization is not without validity and significance. (Wappler, *Thüringen*, pp. 326-327. The report of the hearing follows, pp. 327-333.)

106 Sorga hearing, August 9, 1533, in *TA, Hesse*, pp. 64-69; Berka hearing, July 19-21, 1533 in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, pp. 168-176.

107 Köhler and Scheffer hearing, 1537, *ibid.*, pp. 197-198; 1539 trio's hearing, *ibid.*, pp. 203-204.

state church theologians. This is exactly what happened to Mathes Hasenhan, one of the leaders of Thuringian-Hessian Anabaptism in the 1530's. In Thuringian Anabaptism's dying days in 1540, he capitulated to Bucer's arguments on baptism. He agreed not to proselyte within the state church membership on the traditional arguments of error in baptism. For himself he could not accept the full validity of infant baptism.[108] Needless to say, no Anabaptism could continue to exist on such a position.

To question the existence of a vigorous discipline among the Thuringian Anabaptists is not to deny a sense of brotherhood or to rule out some sort of congregational life. Their sense of brotherhood is testified to by the warmth of their greeting. Always they called one another "Brother" or "Sister."[109] Among some of them the greeting was more elaborate. One said: "The peace of the Lord be with you, brother"; to which the other replied: "And with your spirit."[110] The fuller greeting was utilized as a means for otherwise unacquainted brethren to recognize each other as members of the same brotherhood. It was a kind of password. In a brotherhood scattered by persecution, constantly drawing in fresh members, one could not be expected to recognize every brother on sight. There were without question some meetings of the brethren for mutual edification. Alexander reported that they spoke to each other of godly righteousness on such occasions.[111] They were certainly aware of each other's needs; their testimony on sharing material goods is as unanimous in all of Thuringian Anabaptism as on any other point. They felt themselves bound to proffer financial aid to their traveling ministers.[112] But their entire congregational life as such was constantly threatened by the spectre of capture; they were constantly on the move.[113]

The written evidence for discipline among the Thuringian Anabaptists is scarce. One can safely say that they practiced no

108 Letter of Bucer and Tasch to Philip, February 7, 1540, *TA, Hesse* p. 269. Mathes is a silent but influential figure in Thuringian Anabaptist history in the second half of the 1530's. It was to Mathes that the Moravian Hutterites appealed, against Hans Bott, as one whose doctrine, as they heard from others, was sound. The Tasch-Schnabel correspondence on the question of the trip to England mentions Mathes as a leader.

109 Hans Römer's group made it "Dear Christian Brother" (Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 41. Franconian Anabaptists, hearing of Beutelhans, in Berbig, DZK, XIII, p. 313).

110 Fritz Erbe hearing, in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* p. 139.

111 Testimony of 1533, in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 349.

112 *Ibid.* Also hearing of Thomas Spiegel von Ostheim, 1527, *ibid.,* p. 234.

113 Testimony of Veit Weischenfelder, March 18, 1527 (*ibid.,* p. 242). Some of them defended themselves against the charges of being clandestine, and their ministers having no proper call to preach, with Scripture. It was not only the pressure of persecution but also the necessity for obeying the gospel that led them to such a life. They likened themselves to Christ's disciples who were sent out to move from place to place (Matt. 10:8-13). Their ministers were called of God, like the Apostle Paul (Gal. 1:1), not by men as in the state church. (Köhler and Scheffer, in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* p. 197; Schnabel, "Verantwortung," in *TA, Hesse,* pp. 176-178.)

consistently vigorous discipline; it was at most sporadic. Internal weakness, the absence of a consistent discipline, must be added to the previously given reasons for the relatively early demise of Anabaptism in this region. It was certainly a factor in the relatively large number of recantations and in the absence of a common mind on certain pivotal doctrines such as nonresistance.

The relative absence of discipline among Thuringia's Anabaptists requires some explanation. This lack cannot be laid to intention on the part of the brethren. Several plausible reasons suggest themselves. Harried from place to place, the brethren could not develop a normal congregational life. Secondly, their sense of mission led them to build most of their activity around evangelistic endeavor. The wandering preacher visited a village one evening, preached on repentance and the need for commitment to Christ, baptized those who requested it, and then moved on to another village. His converts lacked consistent instruction. Finally, it is likely that those Anabaptists who were most amenable to the idea of, and necessity for, discipline were attracted by the Hutterite example and emigrated to join the brethren in Moravia. The move to Moravia had a dual motive: persecution at home as against relative freedom in Moravia, and the existence of a strong brotherhood there with an active discipline.

However, absence of discipline in Thuringian Anabaptism was a relative matter. The brethren charged the state church with its complete absence. But compared to Anabaptism elsewhere in Europe, the Thuringian variety was a somewhat undisciplined stepchild.

An examination of the problem of Anabaptist origins in Central Germany is in order. This problem is traditionally answered in Protestant historiography by pointing to Thomas Müntzer as the originator of the movement, or at least the person of most decisive influence in its origin. The Zwickau Prophets, Müntzer's spiritual predecessors, are also frequently added as forerunners of the Anabaptists. A substantial number of writers support the theory that Müntzer initiated the Anabaptist movement.[114] The existence of

114 Much of this literature derives from the efforts of Karl Holl and Heinrich Boehmer to re-examine Müntzer. (See Holl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte* [Tübingen: Siebeck, 1923], I, Chapter VII, "Luther und die Schwärmer," especially pp. 522-424, 437, 447-50, 457-459; Boehmer, "Thomas Müntzer und das jüngste Deutschland," *Gesammelte Aufsätze* [Gotha: Perthes, 1927], especially pp. 221-222.) Both men did an impressive amount of scholarly research on the figure of Müntzer and wrote creative, stimulating interpretations of him. Their remarks on Anabaptism in its relation to Müntzer must be considered of less value because neither did any research on the movement itself. But those remarks, however unsubstantial, were taken as authoritative pronouncements by the scholarly world. See, for example, the exchange between Eberlein and Wiswedel on this point (in *Mühlhäuser Geschichtsbätter*, XXVII [1926-1927], 210-213; XXX [1920-1930], 268-273). Against Wiswedel's protest to

this literature compels one to begin the inquiry into Thuringian Anabaptist origins with a fresh examination of the evidence for the Müntzer theory. It is unquestionably true that Müntzer had some influence on certain persons who later joined the Thuringian Anabaptists. The degree of that influence is more difficult to ascertain. We can begin with an examination of his earlier influence on the most important leaders of the movement.

A number of the later Anabaptist leaders, including some of the most important ones, had fallen under the influence of Müntzer in his heyday. Rink and Hut were his disciples in 1525. Both were at Frankenhausen, the one as participant and the other as itinerant book-peddler and interested spectator. Both escaped unscathed in body, but changed in spirit. The extent of change in Hut has already been thoroughly investigated in another monograph.[115] Here we must discuss the relation between the matured theology of Rink and the ideas of Müntzer in order to learn how much Rink changed since his days as a disciple of Müntzer.

In the ideas of repentance and forgiveness of sins their ways parted. By 1528 Rink had abandoned Müntzer's mysticism for an approach dominated by the twin ideas of repentance and commitment to Christ in holiness of life.[116] His ideas on repentance were Pauline in origin. This does not mean that his soteriology contained no elements of mysticism; the absence of a clear doctrine of atonement, a reliance on primarily Johannine ideas on conversion, and the continued use of the terminology of the mystics (Gelassenheit, for example) suggests a not insignificant degree of mysticism. But his preoccupation with the theme of love as the framework both for man's separation from and reconciliation to God suggests Denk[117] rather than Müntzer[118] as its author. Müntzer built his concept of salvation around the suffering of the cross. Through suffering and pain the soul was made ready to receive the Spirit of God.[119] Rink did not reject the cross as suffering. But to him the cross was the consequence of becoming a Christian, the persecution which the true Christian must expect, rather than an integral part of the

Holl's interpretation of the Müntzer-Anabaptist relation, Eberlein pitted the authority of Holl: who had ever heard of Wiswedel? The stature of Holl as an interpreter of Luther is justifiably very great indeed. But in this instance Wiswedel had read the Anabaptists and Holl had not.

115 Klassen, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-104.

116 The emphasis on repentance is found especially in his use of Scriptures to buttress his case, Scriptures in which the call to repentance predominates (*TA, Hesse,* p. 8, point 4).

117 Jan. J. Kiwiet, "The Theology of Hans Denck," *MQR,* XXXII (1958): 3-27. See particularly the section "The Law of God," pp. 15-17.

118 Annemarie Lohmann, *Zur geistigen Entwicklung Thomas Müntzers* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1931), p. 33.

119 *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 44-45.

redemption process.[120] Rink did not reject Müntzer's idea of resignation (Gelassenheit) in redemption. Indeed, it is at this point that he sounds the most like Müntzer. But his insistence on the necessity for divine aid in achieving Gelassenheit suggests at least an alteration of Müntzer's idea in the direction of a Pauline theology. He did not work through the relationship carefully. There is no explanation in Rink's writings of the respective shares of man and God in the work of man's redemption; there is no discussion of free will and determinism. His soteriology is a mixture of Luther and Denk, with very little of Müntzer remaining.

In baptism also the differences appear greater than the similarities. Müntzer condemned the practice of infant baptism with his customary vehemence. Rink agreed with his arguments that it reduced to nonsense the ceremony of inception into the Christian church, a ceremony that ought to be invested with the greatest solemnity, and that salvation could in no sense be dependent upon infant baptism.[121] But Müntzer did not take the subsequent step of inaugurating adult or believers' baptism, nor did he even cease baptizing infants.[122] It has been suggested that the basis for his protest against infant baptism did not lead logically to adult or believers' baptism,[123] since Müntzer's excessive reliance on the Spirit obviated the necessity for any outward ceremony. On the one hand there is little or nothing in his theology that would lead to believers' baptism either as a seal of one's faith in Christ as Redeemer, or as a sign of commitment to Christ in holiness of life. Rink got these ideas elsewhere. On the other hand, however, adult baptism was not illogical from Müntzer's theological viewpoint.[124] If adult baptism was not inevitable in his position, it was at least not

120 Hearing of 1528, *TA, Hesse,* p. 6; Angersbach testimony in Wappler, *Thüringen* p. 329. See also R. Friedmann, "Thomas Müntzer's Relation to Anabaptism," *MQR,* XXXI (1957), 83.

121 "Protestation oder Entbietung Thomae Müntzers," in O. Brandt, *Thomas Müntzer, sein Leben und seine Schriften* (Jena: E. Diederichs, 1933), pp. 134-135.

122 Müntzer's post-"Protestation" practice is not altogether clear. In 1524 he told Oecolampadius that he baptized infants but not shortly after their birth; he held a baptismal service every two or three months for all those born within that time (C. Hege, "Thomas Müntzer," *ML,* III, 189). He appears to have wanted to hold baptismal services twice annually for children around six or seven years of age (Jordan, "Die Wiedertäufer in Mühlhausen, *Mühlhäuser Geschichtsblätter,* XV [1915], 38). It is clear that he did not practice adult baptism; technically he was not an Anabaptist. On these grounds Sebastian Franck excluded him from Anabaptism proper (*Chronia, Zeytbuch vnd geschychtbibel* [Strassburg: Balthassar Beck, 1531]. fol. 394 *verso*).

123 Müntzer laid more weight on the inner baptism of the Spirit than the outward ceremony (Lohmann, *op. cit.,* p. 48. See R. Friedmann, "Thomas Müntzer's Relation to Anabaptism," *MQR,* XXXI [1957], 80; also Harold S. Bender, "The Zwickau Prophets, Thomas Müntzer, and the Anabaptists," *MQR,* XXVII [1953], 4). It is significant that Conrad Grebel interpreted Müntzer's rejection of infant baptism as a rejection of the entire act, under any circumstances whatsoever, and protested against this rejection. (See H. Fast, "The Dependence of the First Anabaptists on Luther, Erasmus, and Zwingli," *MQR,* XXX [1956], p. 114 and n. 58.)

124 *Ibid.,* pp. 113-114 and note 58.

impossible. Adult baptism could have become the basic sign of reception into Müntzer's Bund, a sign of election. It may be suggested that for those later Anabaptists who sang the praises of Müntzer as prophet and leader, the rite of baptism was essentially the sign of reception into a Bund.[125] Hut's followers in Franconia, for whom the rite was first and foremost a sign of entrance into a Bund, could have derived the idea from Müntzer's theology if not from his explicit teaching.[126]

Baptism led Rink secondarily to the Bund. Müntzer practiced a conventicle Christianity during his residence in Zwickau and instituted a Bund at Allstedt. He intended to pattern his church after that of the New Testament. It was at once the body of the elect and co-terminous with society in a geographical locale. For Müntzer believed that the elect should expel and even extirpate the ungodly. Hence the Allstedters who did not join were expelled from the town. In imitation of the early church Müntzer inaugurated community of goods. He insisted on a leveling of social classes within the Bund. Müntzer's Bund bore a para-military character in line with its purpose to usher in the Kingdom of God. This meant to Müntzer a defense against the ungodly who attacked, and an eventual offense against them in order to wreak the righteous extirpating justice of the Lord upon them.[127] Both activities required military force. Müntzer's Bund in its final, fullest development bore a resemblance to the later group around Hans Römer. But Rink and his followers held a different view. Rink could have gotten from Müntzer the bare idea of a church of believers built on New Testament lines, together with eschatological expectancy. But the ends to which he turned the body, to an earnest quest for a more holy life, and his drastically different means to enlarge the Kingdom make a deeper reliance on Müntzer most unlikely at this point.

With respect to eschatology Müntzer and the Anabaptists show similarity.[128] The records on Rink are so scanty as to permit no declaration on his attitude. But other Anabaptists were filled with a great expectancy of the Lord's return. There was difference in the

125 So Margarete Koch's testimony in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* p. 174, and Jacob Storger's testimony in Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 429.

126 At this point the treatment of Müntzer-Anabaptist relations by H. S. Bender (*MQR,* XXVII, 3-16) is not entirely valid because it deals more specifically with Müntzer and the Swiss Brethren, and the purported genetic relationship between Müntzer and Anabaptist origins in Zürich. It is clear enough that Müntzer was of some influence on Thuringian Anabaptism.

127 Carl Hinrichs, *Luther und Müntzer* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1952), Chapter 1.

128 Friedmann ("Thomas Müntzer's Relation to Anabaptism," *MQR,* XXXI [1957], 85) also does not touch the Central German picture of Anabaptism and its relations to Müntzer because he is dealing with the Zürich circle. Hut agreed to cease preaching his apocalypticism only at what turned out to be the end of his mission; he was imprisoned and died shortly after the agreement. Prior to that he had unquestionably inspired many with his eschatology, including his disciples in Franconia. (See Klassen, *op. cit.,* pp. 70-74.)

delineation of the manner, time, and particular method of the return. The majority of the peaceful Thuringian Anabaptists would have rejected Müntzer's use of force to usher in the Kingdom. But there were a few who sanctioned it.

There was similarity too in the matter of spiritualism. Müntzer believed in a lively Spirit which manifested itself in dreams and visions. On the one hand he was willing to go beyond the limits of the Scriptural lines in his pursuit of the freely coursing Spirit. On the other hand he believed that dreams could originate from ungodly sources, and therefore must be judged on the basis of Scripture.[129] In general the Anabaptists laid a sharper insistence on Scriptural limitations to the Spirit as authority. Nor did they rely as much as Müntzer on visions and dreams; Rink not at all. They did not condemn the Scripture as a dead letter as much as Müntzer did. They found a doctrine of repentance in the Scripture, and ethical injunctions in the Sermon on the Mount. Müntzer used Scripture mainly for his ethical and social ideas. And he relied in the first instance on Old Testament personages as examples worthy of imitation, or on Old Testament law. Christ was to be followed in suffering.[130] The Anabaptists could accept the example of Christ in suffering; but they insited on using Christ as example for holiness of life as well. But if the Anabaptists went beyond Müntzer in reliance on Scripture, and curtailed the effervescence of Müntzer's Spirit, their kinship with him is still apparent. Similarity in kind remains, if degree is different.

Two final issues require only passing mention. On the Lord's Supper Müntzer retained a conservative practice; he retained the Catholic service with few changes, and even called it the mass.[131] The Anabaptists were firm rejectors of the real presence. On the use of military force their ways parted. The majority of Thuringia's Anabaptists acquired their doctrine of nonresistance from other sources.

In summary, one can observe a considerable dependence on Müntzer in Rink's spiritualism and general Anabaptist eschatology. A lesser measure of dependence can be found in Rink's mysticism, and in his idea of a believers' church. But in Rink's ideas on salvation, baptism, Lord's Supper, and nonresistance the dependence is so slight as to be unnoticeable, or the attitude is in direct contrast to Müntzer's. In the four areas where dependence can be shown, Rink changed his ideas to a considerable extent. There were decisive

129 Hinrichs, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-56; Lohmann, *op. cit.*, 33-34, 47.
130 Brandt, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
131 Friedmann, "Thomas Müntzer's Relation to Anabaptism," *MQR* XXXI (1957), 84.

changes in Rink's post-1525 theological development. The total change is of such magnitude that one can safely postulate a kind of conversion for Rink after 1525. Logically it would have centered around his acceptance of believers' baptism. This is not to deny that Müntzer led Rink to the living water, a water somewhat apart from the stream which nourished the Lutheran reform. For this guiding hand Rink must have been grateful. But his subsequent development, under the guidance of Denk's religion, took him far from Müntzer's paths. It is not correct to call the Rink of 1528 a disciple of Müntzer.

The second Thuringian Anabaptist leader of influence who was an earlier disciple of Müntzer was Hans Hut. In his case one observes also a decisive change in his religious ideas. On the most crucial issues, the nature of the church and the attitude toward the state, Hut's divergence from the teachings of Müntzer is the most complete. Hut retained a larger measure of Müntzer's expectancy of a violent return of the Lord than did Rink. But in Hut's church the disciplining brotherhood function can be discerned more clearly than in Rink's religious circle.[132] Both Hut and Rink discovered other, more decisive, sources for their religious views after the disaster at Frankenhausen.

What about those Anabaptists who openly declared themselves followers of Müntzer? Some were obviously unreconstructed rebels. They referred with approval to Müntzer's battlefield activities.[133] Those who insisted that only Christ or God was fit object for the title Lord were perhaps following Müntzer's final pamphlet, in which he paralleled Luther's appeal of July 1524 to the Saxon princes with an appeal to Christ; only God and Christ were worthy of the title Lord.[134] This type of social egalitarianism, however, appeared seldom among the Thuringian Anabaptists. Influence is more difficult to trace in the case of the Anabaptist who praised Müntzer and yet insisted on obedience to government.[135] His inconsistency may be explained on grounds of torture or simple mental confusion. The appeal to Müntzer may also have been an admission of respect for his spiritualism or his mysticism. The Anabaptists never looked at society in terms of the problem of maintaining order. In this sense they were not socially responsible. They did not always

132 For Hut's ideas and for a comparison of these with the theology of Müntzer, I have relied on H. Klassen, *op. cit.*, particularly pp. 87-104.

133 So Margarete Koch, testimony printed in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, p. 174.

134 "Hoch verursachte schutzrede und antwort wider das geistlosse, sanftlebende fleisch zuo Wittenberg . . . ," Lohman, *op. cit.*, p. 64. See the interrogation of Kraut and others, presided over by Melanchthon, in Wappler, *Thüringen*, pp. 147, 150, and 417.

135 Jacob Storger case, October 12, 1537, printed in Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 429

insist on regarding Müntzer as the political authorities did, that is as a rebel. The fact that to any prince he symbolized rebellion did not mean that his social and political aims were uppermost in the minds of all the Anabaptists who respected him.[136]

Of major importance in the ideas of the Anabaptists was the theology of Hans Denk.[137] Some of Rink's points of divergence from Müntzer's ideas show similarity to Denk's teachings. Denk's emphasis on the Law of God as given in love and for the purpose of bringing men to God's love is echoed in Rink's soteriology.[138] Far more striking is the emphasis on a Christian life of obedience to and imitation of Christ.[139] Rink's mysticism and his ethical concern seem likely derivatives from Denk. Denk is much more explicit and detailed than Rink in his infrequent statements; a detailed comparison is therefore impossible. But the gaps in our knowledge of Rink's theology could logically be filled with Denk's ideas, for example in soteriology. Hut likewise received decisive ideas from Denk.[140]

As a second line of influence, one might suggest Jakob Strauss.[141] Geographical proximity makes it appear most probable that Rink had far more personal contact with Strauss than with Müntzer. Strauss got Rink his appointment as pastor at Eckhardtshausen. Rink worked for more than a year at a distance of twelve miles from Strauss' center of activity at Eisenach. Strauss is remembered primarily for his rigoristic opposition to the charging of interest, and the social unrest which his condemnation of the practice unleashed. But Strauss' objection to interest must be seen within the larger context of his advocacy of an enthusiastic sharing of material goods among the brotherhood of Christians, almost to the point of community of goods. In addition there is more than merely the germ of the believers' church in Strauss' thought.[142] His views on baptism, too, were very close to those of later Anabaptists.[143] If Rink got the

136 Boehmer, *op. cit.*, p. 221, considers Müntzer's connection with the Peasants' War, i.e., revolution, to be a circumstantial accident. His mystic-spiritualist ideas were the dominant ones for himself and his subsequent followers.

137 See Jan Kiwiet, "The Life and Theology of Hans Denk," *MQR*, XXXI (1957), 227-259; *ibid.*, XXXII (1958), 3-27.

138 *Ibid.*, XXXII, p. 17.

139 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

140 Klassen, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-112.

141 Strauss is a much neglected figure of importance in the early Central German Refomation. Joachim Rogge, *Der Beitrag des Predigers Jakob Strauss zur frühen Reformationsgeschichte* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1957), is the latest work on Strauss. Rogge suggests his conflict with Luther is the reason for the absence of interest in him by historians.

142 *Ibid.*, pp. 21-24, 71ff., 168. His idea of the church, according to Rogge, is an expanded version of Luther's "Ein Sermon vom Sakrament und von den Brüderschaften," 1519 (*WA*, II, 738ff).

143 Rogge, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-60. Rogge thinks a number of Strauss' distinctive points came from Luther's "Sermon von der Taufe," 1519 (*WA*, II, 728). Strauss laid great weight on inner baptism to bring fruit and salvation. Inner baptism, the baptism of Christ, was a daily requirement. His ideas led logically to the performance of the rite itself on the basis

fire of his opposition to Luther from Müntzer, he could have gotten a fuller body of reasons for opposition from Strauss.[144] Though Müntzer was admittedly the leading figure for turbulence in Central Germany in the mid-1520's, it does not follow that all radicals in the same geographical area and time descended from him.

Finally there remains the theory of the existence of Anabaptism in Central Germany before 1525, which postulates a completely different explanation of origins. The slight possibility that Müntzer's colleague Heinrich Pfeiffer began the practice of adult baptism very early in 1525[145] has been rejected by the editor of one of the major sources[146] used to support the suggestion.[147] One early case of adult baptism is more difficult to explain. The Anabaptist Anna Reichard declared in September 1535 that she had been baptized more than ten years earlier by a certain Bernhardus.[148] This was enough for Ludwig Keller to repeat his theory of Anabaptism being a continuation of the Old Evangelical Brotherhoods, coming in particular from the Bohemian Brethren.[149] The total evidence is too slight to postulate a pre-1525 existence for Anabaptism in Central Germany, although the possibility of a connection with pre-Reformation groups must not be excluded. In the absence of further evidence one must accept Wappler's conclusion that Anabaptism in Central Germany derived from the activities of Hans Hut in northern Franconia in the summer of 1526. Here began the systematic baptism of adult believers.

of individual experience of the inward baptism. It was precisely this kind of subjectivism in the later Anabaptists to which Luther objected.

144 Other ideas which were similar to those of the Anabaptists: a strong emphasis on works (in deliberate contrast to Luther), and a conviction based on the Sermon on the Mount that the Christian must necessarily endure unjust suffering. Strauss' reverence for the Sermon on the Mount paralleled the respect of the Anabaptists. Lutheran Rogge criticizing Strauss for a failure to come to the heart of Lutheran *sola fide* sounds much like the orthodox Lutherans criticizing Anabaptism on the same grounds (Rogge, *op. cit.*, p. 149). To Rogge Strauss' friendship with Rink implicates Strauss with Müntzer (*ibid.*, p. 113). There is no evidence that Rink was in any way a disciple of Müntzer in 1523 when he took the Eckhardtshausen pastorate.

145 So Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 17.

146 *Chronik der Stadt Mühlhausen*, edited by Jordan.

147 Jordan, "Wiedertäufer in Mühlhausen," *Mühlhäuser Geschichtsblätter*, XV (1915), 39. Jordan used negative evidence to reject the assertion: if Pfeiffer had baptized adults, his later accusers in court would have been delighted to mention this as evidence against him. They did not.

148 Hearing on September 21, 1535, printed by Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 529. Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 90, n. 1, declares the date to be false, but produces no proof.

149 L. Keller, "Der sog. Anabaptismus am Harz im 16. Jahrhundert," *Monatshefte der Comenius Gesellschaft*, IX (1900), 183-184.

DOCTRINAL IMPLICATIONS IN SIXTEENTH CENTURY ANABAPTIST HYMNODY

ROSELLA REIMER DUERKSEN*

The hymnbook of any given religious body is frequently considered a reasonably accurate index not only to its mode of worship, but also to its theological formulations. Certainly the hymnbooks of the Reformation era serve as a guide to the doctrinal interpretations being forwarded within the major religious streams of that period. It is clear, for instance, that one of Luther's prime motivations in the introduction of congregational participation in worship was his recognition of the didactic value of hymn singing. It was Luther's hope that "through the use of familiar tunes [it would be possible] to attract the people more easily to the truth. . . ."

Anabaptist hymn writers of the sixteenth century, while writing with great depth of emotion and conviction, as a whole demonstrated neither restraint nor sophistication; for this reason their hymns are particularly helpful in giving the student a picture of the religious philosophy of the average member of this body of the Reformation period. Thus one finds in the Anabaptist hymns not only the expression of lofty ideals but also the often crude theological formulations of the peasant, his personal interpretation of Biblical truth, and his personal attitude toward the common relationships of life. One also finds the reactions of the common man to the general atmosphere of political upheaval.

ANABAPTIST BELIEFS CONCERNING HUMAN REDEMPTION

To a degree, the early Anabaptist view of human redemption as expressed in the hymnody coincides with that of other Reformation groups. Luther's rallying cry of the Reformation, "justification by faith," is echoed again and again. One is saved through the death of Christ and justified by faith in Him. Illustrative of the many references to this doctrine is the following *Ausbund* stanza:

Das vernimm schon, ein Gnadenthron
Ist Christus der Herr worden,
Für alle die, so glauben hie,
In ihm werden gebohren.
Die nehmen ein die Gnade sein,
So sie all Sünd vermeiden.
Denen er hat mit seinem Tod
Das ewig Reich bescheiden.[1]

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1 *Ausbund,* No. 92, stanza 12. (For full titles of works cited below, see Bibliographical Note below.)

But other hymn stanzas present a paradox. While man is saved through faith in Christ, he must respond to the grace of God by being a *Nachfolger Christi* (disciple of Christ). Constantly this belief is brought to the attention of the reader of Anabaptist hymns. Michael Schneider states emphatically that he who wishes to be redeemed must renounce sin, follow Christ, and live according to His will:

Wollet ihr selig werden,
So müsset ihr von Sünden lon,
Christo dem Herren folgen thun,
Nach seinem Willen leben.[2]

In a later stanza of the same hymn, Schneider presents the reverse implication of this belief: he who does not follow Christ is not redeemed by His blood, and his sin is not forgiven:

Wer aber ihm nicht folgen thut,
Den hat auch nit erlösst sein Blut,
Sein Sünd auch nicht vergeben.[3]

Another *Ausbund* writer states firmly that he who does not wish to serve receives no grace from God:

Wer mir nicht dienen wollte,
Der hat bey mir kein Gnad.[4]

He says further that there is only one Way to Life—

Das ist der Weg zum Leben,
Sonst geht kein Strass hinein.
. . .
Christi Nachfolger seyn.[5]

A Dutch writer presents the direct antithesis of the concept of "justification by faith," when he states,

Voor loon zult ghij Gods Rijck ontvanghen.[6]

One of the clearest of all statements of the Anabaptist view of redemption is perhaps that presented in a hymn by Hans Betz.[7] Betz states explicitly that where faith is truly alive and demonstrates itself in discipleship, there it is grounded on Jesus Christ. Where it does not produce works of righteousness, it is dead. Continuing with the subject of redemption, Betz comes to grips with the paradox of the Christian faith as interpreted by the Anabaptists. Man does not obtain the Kingdom of God through his good works, but only through grace:

2 *Ibid.*, No. 82, stanza 1.
3 *Ibid.*, stanza 4.
4 *Ibid.*, No. 94, stanza 1.
5 *Ibid.*, stanza 18.
6 *Het tweede Liedeboeck*, p. 6. "As a compensation you shall attain the kingdom of God."
7 *Ausbund*, No. 110.

Du solt mich eben merken,
Was ich dir sagen thu,
Nicht aus Verdienst der Werken,
Erlangt man Gottes Ruh,
Sondern aus Gnad alleine,
Welche erworben hat
Christus den Heilgen seine,
Dass sie leben aus Gnad.[8]

Thus one finds here a partial solution of the Anabaptist paradox: man is redeemed by faith in Christ, but this faith is sincere and valid only when it is applied in the realm of the practical life. There can be no real separation of faith and good works. The Roman Catholic Church, according to Anabaptist reformers, was too much concerned with a rigid program of works which had no real meaning for the principle of being a disciple of Christ, while the evangelical reformers as a whole were too little concerned with the results of redemption as expressed in the present life.

Other writers throughout all Anabaptist hymnody reiterate similar beliefs defining redemption and the fruits of righteousness. In almost every hymn concerned with the doctrine of redemption, however, two further significant premises are advanced: (1) to be a disciple of Christ and to bear the fruit of the Gospel means to practice Christian love in all relationships of life, and (2) living the life of true discipleship will bring suffering, persecution and martyrdom.

The Practice of Christian Love

Undoubtedly the principle of Christian love is treated more frequently in Anabaptist hymnody than any other single belief. Constant references to love as the primary indication of regeneration are prevalent in all Anabaptist hymn collections, with the exception of *Een Lietboecxken,* in which the gloom of martyr stories pervades throughout. Love is called the foundation of the Christian life,[9] the bond and seal of Christians in all lands,[10] the power that transcends water, fire, and sword (a reference, undoubtedly, to the common modes of execution).[11] Only he who has Christian love is truly born anew of God, for God himself is love and love endures eternally.[12]

But practicing Christian love means more; it also means loving one's enemy. One must love those who are opposed to one's belief with the hope that through love they may be brought to see their errors, states a stanza in *Ein schon Gesangbüchlein.*[13]

8 *Ibid.,* stanza 22.
9 *Veelderhande Liedekens,* p. 42.
10 *Ein schon Gesangbüchlein,* p. 77.
11 *Ausbund,* No. 91, stanza 5.
12 *Ein schon Gesangbüchlein,* p. 217 (2nd Edition).
13 *Ibid.,* p. 32.

The supreme example of love and forgiveness, coming from Christ on the cross, is re-echoed by a number of Anabaptist martyrs who pray for their enemies at the moment of death. Thoman Herman, for example, is able to face martyrdom with the words of his Master on his lips:

Vergieb ims Vater von Himmel,
Sie wissen nicht was sie tun.[14]

Other marytrs express the same spirit of forgiveness.

It is pertinent to emphasize here that within the entire realm of Anabaptist hymnody, there is not a single outburst of violence or hatred. There are, to be sure, scathing denunciations of the leaders and doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, and even of the Lutheran reformers; but nowhere is there recorded any desire to take vengeance upon those who are responsible for the persecutions and martyrdom. Instead, there is constantly the implication that disciples of Christ must bear these persecutions without a tinge of hatred.

The command to practice love in all relationships implies that there is no place for the use of weapons in the life of the Christian. Specific injunctions against the use of the sword are present in Anabaptist hymnody. Hutterite Peter Ecker, in a list of characteristics which distinguish the true Christian from the "world," states:

Er trägt kein Wehr noch Braxen mehr.[15]

An *Ausbund* writer ridicules the fact that contemporary leaders consider it possible to force people into the Kingdom of God at the point of the sword:

Wer hat doch solches je erhört,
Das man soll Christen mit dem Schwerdt
Zu Gottes Reich bekehren?[16]

The Anabaptist viewpoint on love is well summarized in a stanza incorporating Scripture passages much loved by many hymnodists and often quoted, paraphrased, or implied:

Aber vor allen Dingen
Legt an die Liebe schon
Dadurch wir überwinden
Allhie auf dieser Bahn,
Sie ists Band der Vollkommenheit.
Die Liebe ist Gott selber,
Sie bleibt in Ewigkeit.[17]

14 *Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder,* p. 28.
15 *Ibid.,* p. 146.
16 *Ausbund,* No. 46, stanza 9.
17 *Ibid.,* No. 124, stanza 29.

The Necessity of Bearing Persecution and Martyrdom

Anabaptist hymnodists leave no doubt in the mind of the reader concerning the direct consequence of the practice of discipleship and love here on earth; for it is the inevitable lot of those who are disciples of Christ to be persecuted, exiled, and martyred. To be such a disciple implies imitating Christ not only in life, but also in the sense of martyrdom. As Christ was crucified without just reason, so the follower of Christ must expect to suffer a similar fate here on earth.

Again and again hymnodists reiterate that to obey the Word implies enduring the mockery and hatred of the world, that following in Christ's footsteps means finding no peace in the world, and that being a true disciple means bearing the cross. It is only through the cross, persecution, and suffering that one grows into the likeness of Christ. Suffering, then, is viewed not merely as the consequence of discipleship, but as a necessity for those who would attain the Kingdom of God. The author of one *Ausbund* hymn states tersely:

> . . . wer zu Gott will kommen
> Durch Trübsal muss eingahn.[18]

The fate of the Anabaptist is compared with Christ because the persecution and marytrdom grow out of innocence, not guilt:

> Gar viel in Unschuld sterben,
> Wie Christus auch gethan.[19]

There is no salvation in suffering as the result of guilt; but he who does not accept innocent suffering is as excrement in God's sight, states one hymn text.[20]

Further, Anabaptists view suffering not only as a contemporary necessity for the man who would be a true disciple, but hold that righteous men throughout history have been required to endure suffering and martyrdom for their beliefs. Old Testament accounts serve as evidences for the necessity of the righteous to suffer even before the Passion of Christ. Thus the author of the third *Ausbund* hymn places the problem of the contemporary persecutions and martyrdom in an historical perspective, relating how true men since the days of the Old Testament prophets endured suffering. Commencing his martyrs' list with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, Micah, and Zechariah, the writer continues with the stories of the deaths of John the Baptist and Jesus, and, finally, documenting his story heavily from the historian Eusebius, he continues with a long line of

18 *Ibid.*, stanza 21.
19 *Ibid.*, No. 69, stanza 17.
20 *Ibid.*, No. 102, stanza 36.

martyrs in the Christian Church. Likewise, Hutterite Jörg Pruckmair composed a hymn of 105 stanzas, naming martyrs in a long tradition beginning with Old Testament leader Jeremiah, and continuing to contemporary Hutterite leaders such as Jakob Hutter, Hans Amon, Leonhard Lanzenstiel, Peter Diedemann, and others.[21] Anabaptist martyrs are thus linked to a long tradition of righteous people willing to die for their faith; and the present suffering is interpreted as a continuation of the struggle between light and darkness from the begining of time:

> Von Anfang sind die Heil'gen all
> Um Christi willen g'storben hie,
> Uns soll erinnern gleicher Fall.[22]

Many Anabaptist hymnodists understand their suffering as a sign of special divine election. Injustice, the evil use of force, and the persecution of the righteous will continue on earth until the number of saints to be proven through tribulation is complete. This, for example, "Annelein" of Rotterdam reiterates several times in her parting message to her son, praying that he, too, will follow the path of suffering.[23]

Surely the world would gladly be saved if salvation did not necessitate suffering and pain, writes Geörg Grünwald. But all creation must suffer; every living thing in the water, air, or grass must experience pain; he who is not willing to suffer in the name of God must finally suffer in Satan's grasp.[24]

While Anabaptist writers ask only for courage and faith to endure the suffering on earth, and never ask God to vindicate the innocent in their mortal state, they, nevertheless, have every confidence that all sufferers will be vindicated and persecutors and persecuted alike will receive just recompense in the hereafter. Consequently, the vision of the glory of the hereafter receives continuous emphasis and is held constantly before those in tribulation.[24a]

The Future Glory of the Church

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Psalm 126:5) serves as tremendous consolation for persecuted Anabaptists.[25] What the individual suffers and loses here in the mortal life will be repaid to him a hundred thousand times in the life beyond.[26] Continuing the

21 *Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder,* pp. 770-781.
22 *Ausbund,* No. 3, stanza 34.
23 *Ausbund,* No. 18, stanzas 8 and 11.
24 *Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder,* p. 47.
24a See also Ethelbert Stauffer, "The Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom," *MQR* XIX (1945), pp. 179-214.
25 *Ausbund,* No. 59, stanza 13.
26 *Ibid.,* No. 120; No. 122.

Pauline allegory of the Christian as a knight struggling against the evil surrounding him in the world, the Anabaptist hymnodist again and again refers to the reward or trophy to be bestowed upon the faithful as the crown promised to the winner. Sometimes the crown is a crown of honor;[27] sometimes it is the crown of eternal life;[28] sometimes it is specifically a martyr's crown;[29] but always the crown comes as a coveted gift from God, implying eternal joy to those who are willing to endure temporal persecution for the principles of discipleship as interpreted by the Anabaptist. From its frequent reiteration, it would appear that the symbolism of the heavenly crown represented to the Anabaptist the most vivid contrast between his present sad state of rejection and condemnation, and the eternal state of acceptance and recognition by God. Perhaps it also fulfilled a materialistic yearning, emphasizing the extreme contrast between his present uprooted, homeless existence and the security of the heavenly home.

The analogy of the church as the bride of Christ is likewise loved by Anabaptist hymnodists. Other writers affirm that the Holy City has been prepared for those presently enduring persecution.[30] The citizen who enters here will receive from God a new garment of pure silk.[31] All suffering, dread, fear, and pain endured on earth will become a great source of joy in heaven; all shame and mockery experienced here will evoke expressions of honor and praise from all the heavenly host.[32]

The Practice of Believers' Baptism

Because adult baptism was a tangible act in violation of the practices of the established state church, it was cited more often than any other doctrine as the crime condemning an Anabaptist to execution. This fact undoubtedly served to evoke from the Anabaptist writers the enormous body of material defending their position.

Hymnodists repeatedly affirm the necessity of belief as a prerequisite to baptism. The world misinterprets and misuses baptism, they say, baptizing innocent young children in an effort to erase original sin. But this act is invalid, for the infant has no understanding of its significance; neither has he repented of any sin.[33] Therefore, infant baptism is mere idolatry.[34] Baptism is termed a symbol

27 *Ibid.*, No. 68, stanza 18; No. 64, stanza 16.
28 *Ibid.*, No. 98, stanza 18; No. 21, stanza 15.
29 *Ibid.*, No. 25, stanza 20.
30 *Ibid.*, No. 120; No. 122.
31 *Ibid.*, No. 122, stanza 6.
32 *Ibid.*, No. 7, stanza 10.
33 *Ibid.*, No. 54, stanza 9.
34 *Ibid.*, *stanza* 10.

of regeneration; but only those are regenerate who truly believe and acknowledge their belief:

> Allein wer glaubt aus Herzens Grund,
> Und solchs bekennet mit dem Mund.[35]

One *Ausbund* writer, having presented a lengthy list of the attributes of the follower of Christ, states,

> Ein solcher mag recht werden g'tauft.[36]

This can only be interpreted to imply that a candidate for baptism must already be giving evidence in his life of a regenerate heart.

Anabaptist hymnodists repeatedly refer to the true baptism as the submission to God described in I Peter 3:18-22, the covenant or bond of a clear conscience toward God. Undoubtedly these verses became the basic text in the Anabaptist theology of baptism. Thomas Drucker, for example, insists emphatically that baptism is not a cleansing of the sin of the flesh inherited from Adam; it is the "bath of being born again, the bond of a good conscience through which the old man is renewed."[37] Other writers reiterate that to be baptized symbolizes a covenant made with God.

According to Hutterite Hans Raiffer, he who wishes to enter into a covenant or bond with God needs three witnesses in heaven—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and three witnesses on earth—spirit, water, and blood. The first baptism consists of a spiritual baptism, the second of the baptism with water, and the third of the baptism with blood. The implication here is synonymous with that stated so frequently in the interpretation of Christian discipleship: the true baptism demands that the Christian must bear a cross and suffer a fate similar to that of Christ.[38] Hans Betz, in an *Ausbund* hymn states:

> Wer den Tauff nimmt, zu Hand ihm kommt
> Creutz, Trübsal, und das Leiden.[39]

Hans Schlaffer, one of the earliest Anabaptist martyrs, characterizes the Christian thus:

> Denn er sich hat durchs Wiederbad
> Ergeben bis gar in den Tod.[40]

So baptism is really the initial step leading down the road to martyrdom. He who accepts baptism must expect to walk hand in hand with sorrow and death.

35 *Ibid.*, stanza 14.
36 *Ibid.*, No. 67, stanza 7.
37 *Ibid.*, No. 23, stanza 17.
38 *Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder*, p. 560.
39 *Ausbund*, No. 108, stanza 8.
40 *Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder*, p. 23.

While many Anabaptist hymnodists write sharp criticisms against the doctrine that baptism removes from the child the sin of Adam, they are not always agreed in their own conception of original sin. Some writers assert that the infant is not born with the blemish of original sin, and that it is consequently superfluous for the antichrist to attempt to remove this sin through baptism. Thomas Schuster, for example, laments that the antichrist demands baptism of infants who have neither sinned nor repented, nor confessed faith.[41] Hans Raiffer holds that original sin does not affect children until they reach the age of understanding:

Erbsünd bringt keinen Schaden
Den Kindern insgemein
Ehe sie kommen zu Tagen
Das sie verständig sein.[42]

Ausbund writer Michel Schneider declares emphatically that Christ through his death has overcome the original sin of Adam. To anoint an infant with the "filthy bath of the antichrist" *(Sudelbad),* believing that then it may die and be carried by angels into God's kingdom, is an insult to God, implying that He could not grant eternal life without man's action.[43]

In other hymns one finds acceptance of the doctrine of original sin, without, however, a recognition of the validity of infant baptism.[44]

The Lord's Supper

Simple didactic statements clearly defining the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of the body and the blood of Christ are frequent in Anabaptist hymnody. Vigorous attacks against other interpretations are forwarded, often without restraint and in "folksy" terminology. Authors in *Ein schon Gesangbüchlein* and in the *Ausbund* call the teaching of the Presence of Christ in the sacrament "a fabricated lie."[45] On trial for their beliefs, Maria and Ursula of the Netherlands fearlessly tell their accusers that man cannot eat God:

Wir können Gott nicht essen,
Er ist ins Himmels Thron.[46]

Thereupon they explain that the elements of the Supper are a recognition of Christ's death and a symbol which is to make them constantly aware of the fact that Christ is ever present within them in a spiritual sense.

41 *Ibid.,* p. 152.
42 *Ibid.,* p. 175.
43 *Ausbund,* No. 102, stanza 29.
44 *Ein schon Gesangbüchlein,* p. 63, see also *Ausbund,* No. 23.
45 *Ein schon Gesangbüchlein,* p. 221 (2nd Edition); *Ausbund,* No. 107, stanza 33.
46 *Een Lietboecxken,* No. 3; *Ausbund,* No. 17, stanza 19.

Other Anabaptists refute their accusers with the literal impossibility of consuming God. Swiss Brethren Hans Betz and Michel Schneider quote Christ's reference to the biological fact that whatsoever enters the mouth passes through the stomach and is digested. The body and blood of Christ cannot be conceived of in terms of food for mortals, but must be considered in terms of the spiritual.[47]

Hans Betz further emphasizes the Anabaptist position that the Lord's Supper is to be a memorial of Christ's death participated in by those who uphold the standards of discipline of the fellowship, those who shun all appearance of evil.[48] He who partakes of the elements of the Lord's Supper while his sin remains unconfessed is possessed of the devil. One cannot be simultaneously nourished from the table of the Lord and the lust of the devil.[49]

Beliefs Concerning the Incarnation

Antithetical interpretations of the Incarnation appear in Anabaptist hymnody. From the pens of several Dutch writers comes the viewpoint, possibly first expounded by Melchior Hofmann and later acknowledged by such significant leaders as Dirk Philips and Menno Simons, that Christ did not receive his body through the sinful human flesh of Mary, but that Mary served only as a medium through which Christ was brought into the world—somewhat analogous to glass which allows light to penetrate through it into the room, but is not a maker of light. A hymn stanza from the the pen of a Dutch writer named Johann Schut, for example, clearly denies Christ's linkage to the flesh and blood of Mary.[50] This hymn stanza, translated into the German language, appears in the following form in *Ein schon Gesangbüchlein:*

> So theten sie mich fragen/Mit vielen worten güth,
> Ob Christus auch nit were/Von Maria fleisch und blut,
> Des hab ich nie gelesen/Hab ich vor jn bekant,
> Wie soll der von erden wesen,/Den Gott der Vatter hat gesandt?

There is no evidence, however, that the Swiss Brethren or Hutterites ever held this view. Their hymns speak often of Christ, born of the Virgin Mary and incorporating the qualities of both God and man.[51]

The Ban, Oaths, and Footwashing

The manner of maintaining church discipline through the use of the ban is treated in detail by *Ausbund* writer Hans Straub, in a rhymed outline of the Anabaptist interpretation of Matthew 18.[52]

47 *Ausbund,* No. 102 and No. 107.
48 *Ibid.,* No. 92, stanza 15.
49 *Ibid.,* stanza 19.
50 *Een Lietboecxhen,* No. 25; *Veelderhande Liedekens* (1566), p. 261.
51 See, for example, *Ausbund,* No. 2, No. 70. and No. 81.
52 *Ausbund,* No. 56.

At the same time, many Anabaptists fling criticisms of uncleanness at the other church bodies because of their failure to interpret church discipline in a like manner. Injunctions against the swearing of oaths appear in several hymns.[53] The Christian, they emphasize, is obliged to be truthful at all times; he who wishes to deceive his neighbor will also do so under oath.[54] Several Anabaptist hymn writers stress the importance of observing footwashing in the Lord's Supper to symbolize humility and love.[55]

Denunciations of the Roman Catholic Church

Lashing criticisms of the Roman Church appear in early Reformation hymnody as a whole, but among the Anabaptists they are voiced with an utmost lack of restraint. Not only is the Roman Church (or, at times, the Pope) the antichrist, she is also a prostitute, the whore of Babylon, or the seven-headed beast. Celibacy, the confessional, the Mass—all are false practices perpetrated by the doorkeepers of hell. Luther and Zwingli have likewise betrayed the faith. Luther is several times termed the New Pope who has simply replaced the old garb with a new. Hutterite Thoman Schuster brands him as *der rechte Ziegenbock*.[56]

The Belief in an Imminent Eschatology

Throughout Reformation hymnody runs the overtone of the belief in an imminent eschatology. That the dangerous emphasis on chiliasm did not capture the heart of the Anabaptist movement is attested, however, by the fact that vicious militant plans for ushering in the kingdom of God are nowhere reflected in the printed Anabaptist hymn collections. Even the hymn ascribed to Hans Hut, found in both the *Ausbund* and *Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder*,[57] gives no indication of his chiliastic tendencies. It is also significant to note that not a single one of the hymns of Thomas Müntzer was adopted for use in Anabaptist collections, although some hymnologists have attempted to link his extant hymns with those of the Anabaptist group.[58]

In Anabaptist hymnody as a whole the imminent return of Christ serves to underscore two beliefs basic to the Anabaptist faith: (1) that the end of history will mean judgment and damnation to eternal punishment for the "world," particularly for the contem-

53 See, for example, *Ausbund*, No. 13, stanzas 4 and 5.
54 *Ibid.*
55 *Ibid.*, No. 67 and No. 119; *Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder*, p. 140.
56 *Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder*, p. 153.
57 *Ausbund*, No. 8; *Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder*, p. 38.
58 Philipp Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1870), Vol. III, 440-444.

porary religious and political rulers; and (2) that the end of history will bring reward to those who have endured and are enduring persecution for the sake of their beliefs.

Theological implications concerning many other facets of the Anabaptist belief can be found in the sixteenth century hymns. The above are presented, however, to indicate which religious issues appear to be uppermost in the minds of the writers, to suggest that variations in interpretation are common in regard to many doctrinal topics, and to emphasize that Anabaptist hymnody, as a whole, represents the views of the common man projected through the medium of the *Volkslied.*

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Een nieu Liedenboeck van alle nieuwe ghedichte liedekens die noyt in druck en zijn gheweest ghemaect wt den Ouden ende Nieuwen Testamente nv eerst byden anderen vergadert ende nieus in Druck ghebracht (Amsterdam, 1562).

Lietboeck, inhoudende Schriftuerlijcke Vermaen Liederen, Claech Liederen, Gebeden, Danck Liederen, Lofsanghen, Psalmen ende ander stichtelijcke Liederen, de welcke gheoeffent ende ghesongen worden onder de medeleden der Ghemeenten Christi. Edited by Hans de Ries (Rotterdam, 1582).

Een Lietboecxken, tracterende van den Offer des Heeren, int welcke oude en nieuwe Liedekens, wt verscheyden Copien vergadert zijn, om by het Offerboeck gheuoecht le worden. (This hymn collection always appears as the last part of *Het Offer des Heeren,* which was first published in 1562. The fourth known edition, of 1570, is the one cited in the above article. A group of 29 hymns also appeared in the first part of *Het Offer* in 1570 and in all subsequent editions.)

Het tweede Liedeboeck van vele diuersche Liedekens ghemaect wt den ouden ende nieuwen Testamente Waer of sommighe eetyls in Druck zijn wtghegaen ende sommige noyt in Druck gheweest, habbende daer by gheuoecht (Amsterdam: Biestkens, 1583). This is an enlarged edition of *Een nieu Liedenboeck.*

Veelderhande Liedekens gemaect wt den Ouden ende Nieuwen Testamente die voortijts in druck zijn wtgegaen: Waer toe noch veel liedekens ghestelt zijn die noyt in druck geweest en habben ende zijn in ordininge van den A. B. C. by den andern gevoecht (n. p., Emden? 1566).

Veelderhande liedekens ghemaeckt wt den Ouden ende Nieuwen Testamente wtgelesen en vergadert wt verscheyden copien Oock zijn hier by geuoecht veel nieuwe Liedekens va verscheyde Historien des oude testaments met veel andere die noyt in druc en zijn geweest en zijn in ordeninge vande A.B.C. gestelt (n. p., Emden? 1569). Although having a title very similar to the *Veelderhande Liedekens* of 1562, this is a revised edition of *Een nieu Liedenboeck.*

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GRACE AND DISCIPLESHIP IN ANABAPTISM

JOHN C. WENGER

INTRODUCTION

One of the common charges against Anabaptism is that it is weak on the doctrine of grace. The church for the Anabaptists, so it is asserted, had to be a body without spot or wrinkle, and this legalistic and perfectionistic ethic tended to obscure the grace of God. Is this charge true? Did our Anabaptist fathers believe in some sort of synergism, and did they hold a low view of the grace of God? Did they regard their achievement as Christians as so perfect as not to stand in need of divine grace? Let us turn to the sources for the evaluation of these charges.

One of the finest sources for the ethical and doctrinal content of Anabaptism is the little composite volume *(Sammelband*[1]*)* from about the year 1527 which contains the following items:

Title	*English Translation*
1. Pastoral letter and Schleitheim Confession	*(MQR,* October 1945)
2. Sattler's[1a] Letter to the Church at Horb	*(Martyrs Mirror,* 418 ff)
3. Trial and Martyrdom of Michael Sattler	*(Martyrs Mirror,* 416 ff)
4. The Satisfaction of Christ	*(MQR,* October 1946)
5. Concerning Divorce	*(MQR,* April 1947)
6. Two Kinds of Obedience	*(MQR,* January 1947
7. The Hearing of False Prophets	*(MQR,* October 1947)
8. Concerning Evil Overseers	*(MQR,* October 1947
9. A Rinck Epistle	*(MQR,* October 1947)
10. Allow the Children to Come to Me	*(MQR,* October 1947)

Mention must also be made of the *Rechenschaft (Vindication)* of Anabaptism, written by an intelligent Anabaptist leader named Martin Weniger, commonly called Lingki, who served as chief spokesman for the Brethren in the Swiss Brethren debate with the Reformed clergy held at Zofingen in 1532. We have also the letters of Conrad Grebel, the hymns of various Anabaptists in the *Ausbund* of 1564, and the writings of Pilgram Marpeck, Dirk Philips, Thomas von Imbroich, and especially of Menno Simons, the best writer of them all. The testimonies of the Anabaptists who were on trial and

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1 In the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

1a At the end of the account of Sattler's martyrdom in the *Martyrs Mirror,* the author, T. J. van Braght, adds the Letter of Sattler to the Church at Horb, after which he writes: "Of this hero and witness of Jesus Christ there are also other writings extant in print, treating of the atonement of Christ (4), brotherly union (1), divorce (5), of evil overseers (8), and the hearing of false prophets (7)." Van Braght (1660) took this statement out of P. J. Twisck's *Historie* of 1626, p. 11, which was in turn a reprint of a 1615 work. There was also a Dutch edition of the above *Sammelband,* dated 1560, and a Dutch reprint of 1565.

their letters from prisons are also valuable for our study. For these records we now have not only the *Martyrs Mirror,* but also the recent *Täuferakten* volumes.[1b] Let us turn now to an analysis of the views of the Anabaptists on discipleship and grace. We will find Menno Simons especially clear in his doctrinal discussions.

I. WHAT CHRIST DESIRES

1. One of the points on which Menno hammers away throughout his writings is this: *It is not sufficient to be baptized and to take communion.* God is not satisfied with merely outward ceremonies. In his *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* Menno insists on the inner transformation, the new creature, as that which alone avails with God:[2]

> In short, this matter we teach from the Word of God as much as in us is, in order to restrain those carnal lusts which war against the soul. We are to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts, not to conform to this world, to put off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world. We must put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, whose fruits are faith, love, hope, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. We must be patient in suffering, merciful, compassionate, chaste, sincerely hating and rebuking all sin, having a sincere love and zeal for God and His Word.

In his excellent little book entitled *Christian Baptism,* Menno addresses the church thus:[3]

> My beloved children in Christ Jesus, you are aware that all the world by its blind and foolish unbelief has hitherto followed adulterously after outward works and ceremonies. Yet you should not do likewise. You should know that the righteousness which avails before God consists not in any ceremony and outward work, but exclusively in a true, pious, and fruitful faith, and in this manner faith which comes by the Word of God cannot be without fruit. . . . But it leads into all manner of righteousness, causes men willingly to submit in all obedience, and it gives willingness cheerfully to comply not only with baptism, but with all the words and ceremonies which God, the gracious Father, . . . has so clearly taught and commanded in His holy Gospel.
>
> Therefore true faith is the fulness of righteousness (Rom. 3 and 5); yes, it is the mother which bears all Christian virtues, and by reason of this, the Word of God ascribes everything to it, such as righteousness (Rom. 3:23 and 5:1), blessing (Gal. 3:14), salvation (Mark 16:16), and life everlasting (John 3:36; 17:4). It does not ascribe these to ceremonies, . . . but it is because of the faith which compels us to observe these ceremonies. . . .

1b The *Täuferakten* are now being published in the series "Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer."

2 *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons,* edited by J. C. Wenger, Scottdale, 1956, 113.

3 *Ibid.,* 267.

2. The first earmark of the new creature is repentance and contrition. In his *Reply to Gellius Faber,* Menno adds:[4]

> Now where there is such a faith which brings forth a new, converted and changed mind; which dies unto sin and strives after a new life, transplants us from Adam to Christ, puts off the old man with his works, and puts on the new man with his works, and thus conforms all his thoughts, words, and works to the Spirit, Word, and ways of the Lord; behold, there is that true repentance to which the holy prophets. John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ, together with all the apostles and pious servants, have so earnestly pointed and so faithfully admonished us.

And in his little book *The New Birth,* Menno earnestly exhorts:[5]

> My dearly beloved reader, take heed to the Word of the Lord. . . . I warn you faithfully. . . . He will not save you nor forgive your sins nor show you His mercy and grace except according to His Word; namely, if you repent and if you believe, if you are born of Him, if you do what He has commanded and walk as He walks. . . . If you do not repent there is nothing in heaven or on earth that can help you. . . .

In the same work he gives this stern warning:[6]

> Tell me, dearly beloved, where and when did you read in the Scriptures, the true witness of the Holy Ghost and criterion of our consciences, that the unbelieving, disobedient, carnal man, the adulterous, immoral, drunken, avaricious, idolatrous, and pompous man has one single promise of the kingdom of Christ and His church, yes, part or communion in His merits, death, and blood? I tell you the truth, nowhere and never do we read it in the Scriptures.

The German word for repentance and contrition, which the Swiss Anabaptists used again and again, was *Bussfertigkeit.* Whether a teacher emphasized *Bussfertigkeit* was a sort of touchstone as to his soundness. In the Bern Disputation of 1538[7] a spokesman for the Swiss Brethren reported that while he was still a member of the national church he observed that:

> No beginning was made toward true Christian living . . . and although the mass and the images were finally abolished, true repentance and Christian love were not in evidence. . . . Then God sent His messengers, Conrad Grebel and others. . . . I found them men who had surrendered themselves to the doctrine of Christ by repentance (*Bussfertigkeit*). With their assistance we established a congregation in which repentance was in evidence by newness of life in Christ.[7]

3. A major requirement for the believer is discipleship *(Nach-*

4 *Ibid.,* 659.
5 *Ibid.,* 92.
6 *Ibid.,* 89.
7 J. C. Wenger, *The Doctrines of the Mennonites* (Scottdale, 1952), 67.

folge). Christians are to be identified with Christ in His death and in His resurrection. In *The New Birth*[8] Menno insists:

> By this counsel we are all taught that we must hear Christ, believe in Christ, follow His footsteps, repent, be born from above; become as little children, not in understanding, but in malice; be of the same mind as Christ, walk as He did, deny ourselves, take up His cross and follow Him; and that if we love father, mother, children, or life more than Him, we are not worthy of Him.

In *The Cross of the Saints* Menno writes almost ecstatically:[9]

> Therefore, my very precious brethren and sisters in the Lord, do take the crucified Jesus as your example, and the righteous apostles and prophets of God. Learn through them how they all crept in at this very narrow gate and have left all things hanging at the entrance, for they had their hearts trained there, and they were so endowed and drawn by God that they knew nothing, sought nothing, loved and desired nothing save the eternal, heavenly, and imperishable treasure and existence, that is, God and eternal life. They were so grounded in love and driven by love, and were so firm and immovable, that neither life nor death, . . . nor empires nor rulers; neither hunger nor sword, nor any other torture, pain, or means, could frighten them away from the love which is in Christ Jesus. Their thoughts, their words, their acts, their life, and their death were Christ's. Their kingdom and rest they sought not upon this earth, for they were spiritually, heavenly minded, and all their fruit was righteousness, light, and truth. Their whole lives were pure love, chastity, humility, obedience, and peace. The transient, wicked world with all its works was to them an offense and an abomination. They loved their God with all their soul, and therefore they rebuked all that was against His holy will, His honor, and His Word. They loved their neighbors as themselves, and therefore they admonished and rebuked them in love, served them, pointed out and taught God's pure will, Word, and truth with all diligence, and sought their salvation with all their power and at a great cost to their own name and life.

Individually, discipleship is Christ's requirement for the believer.

4. For the disciples corporately there must be (1) the keeping of the Lord's ordinances or sacraments, and (2) church discipline. In *The New Birth,* after saying that believers must follow in the footsteps of Christ, and that they must not love the world or conform to it, Menno added:[10]

> Also, we are to baptize upon faith and not without it, and celebrate the Lord's Supper in a sincerely penitent congregation (I mean, so far as man can judge). We must practice exclusion or the ban, according to the Scriptures. We are to fear, serve, and love the Lord with all our heart, and walk in His commandments. And we are to assist our neighbor, comfort and serve him as much as in us is. . . .

8 *Op. cit.,* 101.
9 *Ibid.,* 798.
10. *Ibid.,* 101.

In another context in the same work Menno describes the true church thus:[11]

> Their baptism they administer to the believing according to the commandment of the Lord, in the doctrines and usages of the apostles.
>
> Their Lord's Supper they celebrate as a memorial of the favors and death of their Lord, and in incitement to brotherly love.
>
> Their ban or excommunication descends on all the proud scorners—great and small, rich and poor, without any respect of persons, who once passed under the Word but have now fallen back, those living or teaching offensively in the house of the Lord—until they repent.

Six signs, says Menno, in his *Reply to Gellius Faber,* in a brief summary, identify the true church:[12] (1) Pure doctrine, (2) Scriptural use of sacramental signs, (3) obedience to the Word, (4) unfeigned, brotherly love, (5) a bold confession of God and Christ, and (6) oppression and tribulation for the sake of the Word.

5. Being a true Christian also involves separation from the evil world. In his *Reply to False Accusations*[13] Menno wrote:

> The Scriptures "teach that there are two opposing princes and two opposing kingdoms: the one is the Prince of peace; the other the prince of strife. Each of these princes has his particular kingdom, and as the prince is, so is also the kingdom."

And in his *Reply to Gellius Faber,* Menno wrote[14]

> The entire evangelical Scriptures teach us that the church of Christ was and is, in doctrine, life, and worship, a people separated from the world. . . . And since the church always was and must be a people, a separate people, . . . and since it is as clear as the noonday sun that for many centuries no difference has been visible between the church and the world, but that they have without differentiation run together in baptism, Supper, life, and worship, . . . therefore we are constrained by the Spirit and Word of God . . . to gather together . . . not unto ourselves but unto the Lord, a pious and penitent congregation or church. . . .

To Martin Micron, Menno wrote in 1556:[15]

> Love is the total content of Scripture. Everyone that loveth, says John, is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. And he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Without this love, it is all vain, whatever we may know, judge, speak, do, or write. The property and fruit of love is meekness, kindness. Love is not envious, not crafty, not deceitful, not puffed up, nor selfish. In short, where love is, there is a Christian.

6. Another mark of true Christians is bearing the cross, a willing acceptance of the reproach and suffering incidental to being a

11 *Ibid.,* 94.
12 *Ibid.,* 743.
13 *Ibid.,* 554.
14 *Ibid.,* 679.
15 *Ibid.,* 917.

child of God and doing His will. Menno wrote a whole booklet on *The Cross of the Saints.*[16] And in his *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* he ventured this prophecy:[17]

> I have not so written as though the cross of Christ may thereby be avoided; in no wise. For I know and am persuaded that the lamb will never be at peace with the wolf, the dove with the eagle, and Christ with Belial. Truth will be hated, even if spoken by Christ Himself from heaven. And neither Scripture nor piety, neither Christ nor apostle, neither prophet nor saint, neither life nor property, will prevail upon men. All those who rebuke in pure and honest zeal this haughty, avaricious, proud, idolatrous, blood-drunken world, all who diligently seek their happiness and eternal welfare, must suffer and tread the winepress.

In *The Cross of the Saints* Menno was also able to refer to contemporary history as demonstrating the reality of cross bearing:[18]

> For how many pious children of God have we not seen during the space of a few years deprived of their homes and possessions for the testimony of God and their conscience; their poverty and sustenance written off to the emperor's insatiable coffers. How many have they betrayed, driven out of city and country, put to the stocks and torture. How many poor orphans and children have they turned out without a farthing. Some they have hanged, some have they punished with inhuman tyranny and afterward garroted them with cords, tied to a post. Some they have roasted and burned alive. Some, holding their own entrails in their hands, have powerfully confessed the Word of God still. Some they beheaded and gave as food to the fowls of the air. Some have they consigned to the fish. They have torn down the houses of some. Some have they thrust into muddy bogs. They have cut off the feet of some, one of whom I have seen and spoken to.

Negatively, Menno insists[19] in *The True Christian Faith:*

> I know of a certainty that a proud, haughty person is no Christian, . . . that an avaricious, selfish person is no Christian, that a drunken gluttonous person is no Christian, that an impure, fornicating person is no Christian, that a heady, envious person is no Christian, that a disobedient, idolatrous person is no Christian, that a false, untruthful person is no Christian, that an untrustworthy, thieving person is no Christian, that a defaming, slandering person is no Christian, or anybody incompassionate, or cruel, even if he is baptized a hundred times and attends the Lord's Supper daily.

Positively, Menno writes in *Not Cease Teaching and Writing:*[20]

> They are the true congregation of Christ who are truly converted, who are born from above of God, who are of a regenerate mind by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the hearing of the divine Word, and have become the children of God, have entered into obedience to Him, and live unblamably in His holy commandments. . . .

16 *Ibid.*, 579-622.
17 *Ibid.*, 225.
18 *Ibid.*, 599.
19 *Ibid.*, 382.
20 *Ibid.*, 300.

Menno felt that the transforming miracle of the new birth effectively changed sinful and selfish people into loving witnesses for Christ who sought to do only good to all men. In his *Reply to False Accusations* he gives this testimony:[21]

> All those who are born of God, who are gifted with the Spirit of the Lord, who are, according to the Scriptures, called into one body and love in Christ Jesus, are prepared by such love to serve their neighbors, not only with money and goods, but also after the example of their Lord and Head, Jesus Christ, in an evangelical manner, with life and blood.

7. Finally, what motive lies behind the good works of the child of God? Might it be an anxious effort to make sure of heaven, to supplement, as it were, the grace of God in our salvation? In *The True Christian Faith* Menno replies:[22]

> For all the truly regenerated and spiritually minded conform in all things to the Word and ordinances of the Lord. Not because they think to merit the atonement of their sins and eternal life. By no means. In this matter they depend upon nothing except the true promise of the merciful Father, given in grace to all believers through the blood and merits of Christ, which blood is and ever will be the only eternal medium of our reconciliation; and not works, baptism, or the Lord's Supper. . . . For if our reconciliation depended on works and ceremonies, then grace would be a thing of the past, and the merits and fruits of the blood of Christ would end. Oh no, it is grace, and will be grace to all eternity. . . .

II. DIVINELY TRANSFORMED

Menno and the Anabaptists were fully aware that people need more than knowledge, and that it is not enough to be taught. The Christian life is not a pattern of life which can be lived in human strength. Indeed, there will be no inner yearning to live a truly Christian life on the part of an unconverted man. Menno therefore began his booklet *The Spiritual Resurrection* with these significant words:[23] "The Scriptures teach two resurrections, namely, a bodily resurrection from the dead at the last day, and a spiritual resurrection from sin and death to a new life and a change of heart." Later in the same treatise he explained:[24]

> As said above, every creature has the nature and disposition of that of which it is born, and is disposed in the same way as is the seed from which it comes. . . . The divine Word . . . changes and renews the whole man, that is, from the carnal to the spiritual, the earthly into the heavenly; it transforms from death unto life, from unbelief to belief, and makes men happy.

21 *Ibid.*, 558.
22 *Ibid.*, 396, 397.
23 *Ibid.*, 53.
24 *Ibid.*, 57.

Menno never ceased to stand in awe of the hand of God in his own conversion. It was the spring of 1535 when he for the first time in his life really turned from sin to God. About two years later he writes in his *Meditation on the Twenty-Fifth Psalm:*[25]

> I also, dear Lord, the greatest of all sinners, and the least among all the saints, am not worthy to be called Thy child or servant. . . . I resisted in former times Thy precious Word and Thy holy will with all my powers, and with full understanding against Thy manifest truth, taught and lived, and sought my own flesh, praise, and honor, more than Thy righteousness, honor, Word, and truth. Nevertheless Thy fatherly grace did not forsake me, a miserable sinner, but in love received me, converted me to another mind, led me with the right hand, and taught me by the Holy Spirit until of my own choice I declared war upon the world, the flesh, and the devil. . . . and willingly submitted to the heavy cross of my Lord Jesus Christ. . . .

Nineteen years after his conversion Menno writes in his *Reply to Gellius Faber:*[26]

> And so you see, my reader, in this way the merciful Lord through the liberal goodness of His abounding grace took notice of me, a poor sinner, stirred in my heart at the outset, produced in me a new mind, humbled me in His fear, taught me to know myself in part, turned me from the way of death, and graciously called me into the narrow pathway of life and the communion of the saints. To Him be praise forevermore. Amen.

The Anabaptists taught that men are saved by grace through faith. But what is meant by the Gospel? And what is saving faith? In the *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* Menno explains:[27]

> The Gospel is the blessed announcement of the favor and grace of God to us, and of forgiveness of sins through Christ Jesus. Faith accepts this Gospel through the Holy Ghost, and does not consider former righteousness or unrighteousness, but hopes against hope (Rom. 4:18), and with the whole heart casts itself upon the grace, Word, and promises of the Lord. . . . In this the heart is renewed, converted, justified, becomes pious, peaceable, and joyous, is born a child of God, approaches with full confidence the throne of grace, and so becomes a joint heir of Christ and a possessor of eternal life....
>
> There is none that can glory in himself touching this faith, for it is the gift of God. All who receive it from God receive a tree loaded with all manner of good and delicious fruit. Happy is he to whom God gives this gift, for it is more precious than gold, silver, or precious stones. Nothing can be compared with it. He that receives it receives Christ Jesus, forgiveness of sins, a new mind, and eternal life.

In his essay entitled *The New Birth,* Menno explains:[28]

> This regeneration of which we write, from which comes the penitent, pious life that has the promise, can only originate in the Word

25 *Ibid.,* 69.
26 *Ibid.,* 671.
27 *Ibid.,* 115, 116.
28 *Ibid.,* 92, 93, 99.

> of the Lord, rightly taught and rightly understood, and received in the heart by faith through the Holy Ghost. . . .
>
> The regenerate, therefore, lead a penitent and new life, for they are renewed in Christ and have received a new heart and spirit. Once they were earthly-minded, now heavenly; once they were carnal, now spiritual; once they were unrighteous, now righteous; once they were evil, now good. And they live no longer after the old corrupted nature of the first earthly Adam, but after the new upright nature of the new and heavenly Adam, Christ Jesus. . . . Their poor weak life they daily renew more and more, and that after the image of Him who created them. Their minds are like the mind of Christ; they gladly walk as He walked; they crucify and tame their flesh with all its evil lusts. . . . They put on Christ and manifest His spirit, nature, and power in all their conduct. . . . Hatred and vengeance they do not know. . . . Avarice, pride, unchastity, and pomp they hate and oppose. . . . They meditate upon the law of the Lord by day and by night; they rejoice at good, and are grieved by evil. . . . Their thoughts are pure and chaste, their words are true and seasoned with salt, with them it is a yea that is yea, and a nay that is nay. . . . Their hearts are heavenly and new; their minds peaceful and joyous. They seek righteousness with all their might. . . .
>
> I have told you often and tell you again that all who are born of God, rightly baptized in the Spirit, fire, and water as the Scriptures teach, are heavenly-minded and godly. Their sins they bury. They lead a penitent, pious, virtuous life according to the Word of the Lord. They show the nature and power of Christ which dwells in them by word and work. They bring forth the fruits of the Spirit and suppress the works of the flesh. They are proper members of the body of Christ and labor according to the gift received. In short, they are fruit-bearing branches of the true vine, and their fruits abide unto eternal life.

The key to the proper understanding of the life of victory so emphatically taught by Menno and the Anabaptists is the proper appreciation of the Spirit of God. Roman Catholicism had no real doctrine of present holiness but regarded the sacraments as a sort of divine remedy for the guilt of sin, and then trusted in penal suffering in purgatory to eventually admit one to heavenly glory. The Protestant state churchmen of the sixteenth century taught a somewhat one-sided doctrine of justification by faith, and largely neglected the equally strong assertions of the New Testament that Christ by His passion, death, and resurrection had here and now completely conquered the forces of sin and death. The Christian need not therefore live in bondage to the world, or the flesh, or the devil. It was the Anabaptists who saw both justification in Christ and sanctification in Christ. Their trust was not even in water baptism, although they believed firmly in sealing one's commitment to a life of redeemed discipleship by water baptism. It was rather the inner baptism of the Holy Spirit which enabled a life of genuine holiness

and victory. But let us turn to Menno and allow him to say it in his own words. This he does in his best book, *Foundation of Christian Doctrine*:[29]

> . . . Christ and His apostles teach that regeneration, as well as faith, comes from God and His Word, which Word is not to be taught to those who are unable to hear or understand, but to those who have the ability both to hear and to understand. This is incontrovertible.
>
> The holy Apostle Peter also declares the same and says that even baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the covenant (*Verbondt*) of a good conscience with God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
>
> Here Peter teaches us how the inward baptism saves us, by which the inner man is washed. For only this inward baptism. . . . is of value in the sight of God, while outward baptism follows as an evidence of obedience which is of faith. For if outward baptism could save without the inward, then the whole Scriptures which speak of the new man would be spoken to no purpose. . . . Oh no, outward baptism avails nothing so long as we are not inwardly renewed, regenerated and baptized with the heavenly fire and the Holy Ghost of God.

In his excellent book on *Christian Baptism* Menno comments thus on the good conscience to which Peter refers in I Peter 3:21:[30]

> By this passage of Peter, the baptism of believers is again clearly affirmed, and the baptism of infants repudiated. For it is clearly impossible that anyone can have a good conscience except he who believes and whose heart is regenerate and converted; who acknowledges the divine Word which teaches that God the Almighty Father, whose enemies we were before, is now again reconciled to us through Christ Jesus, His beloved Son; so that henceforth through the merits of our beloved Lord, neither hell, devil, past sins, eternal death, nor the wrath of God, will hurt, harm, or hinder us. All those who truly believe this shall receive and obtain a joyous mind and a good conscience by the resurrection of Christ Jesus, as Peter says, because He has so victoriously triumphed over all His enemies, visible and invisible, to our profit, and has taken His seat . . . at the right hand of His Father. Such persons are first inwardly baptized with the Spirit and fire, according to the Word of God, are taught in their hearts by His Spirit, and are led in all divine truth, righteousness, obedience, and evangelical fruits and works. They are inwardly fired by this fire of love, having become conscious by the Word of God that such great grace—I repeat it, grace—has been bestowed on them through Jesus Christ that they neither regard nor see lords, princes, learned men, councils, long usages, nor their wives, children, flesh, blood, placards, or any other threats; not even life or death. They embrace without reservation, continuing glad in the Holy Spirit, not only the outward baptism, but also the works of love and the fruits of righteousness which the true mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ has taught and commanded us in His holy Gospel, either Himself or through His holy apostles.

29 *Ibid.*, 124.
30 *Ibid.*, 246, 247.

> In this manner baptism saves us, . . . not the outward, literal baptism, but the inward, spiritual baptism . . .

Menno closes his *Meditation on the Twenty-Fifth Psalm* with this beautiful prayer:[31]

> O God of Israel, create in us a pure heart that longeth for Thy blessed Word and will. Send forth faithful laborers into Thy harvest, who cut and gather the grain in due season, wise builders who lay for us a good foundation, that in the last days Thy house may be glorious and appear above all the hills, that many people may go thither and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in his paths, that we may walk before Thee in peace and liberty of conscience all the days of our lives, under pious magistrates and blameless teachers, with a Christian baptism, true Supper, godly life, and proper excommunication, that Thou mayest be eternally honored and praised in us as in Thy beloved children through Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with Thee, O Father, and Thy Holy Spirit, be praise and everlasting dominion. Amen.

III. WITH FEET OF CLAY

Like the writers of the New Testament epistles, the Anabaptists paint in glowing colors the fullness of redemption from sin. It is little wonder that they were accused of teaching perfectionism—although surely the same charge could have been brought against Christ's apostles. But when we turn to the Anabaptists we do not find perfectionism. We find a sober awareness that they had inner need and weakness, that in the flesh they were weak and fallible and prone to that which is evil. In the Zofingen debate of 1532 Martin Weniger humbly confessed:[32] "In me there is nothing good. I am unable of myself even to think anything that is good, but am as others flesh and blood, and subject to temptation." Matthias Servaes (1536-1565), a German Anabaptist elder, wrote from prison before his martyrdom:[33]

> I write this, my brethren and sisters, in order that we may learn to know God, and why He created man, what He requires of him that he shall do and not do, and why we are to show Him love and obedience; so that we may not seek righteousness or salvation from our works, from what we do or do not do. For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified before the Lord. . . . Nor shall we be able to pay what we owe. But we hope to be justified and saved only through the grace of God, through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Another martyr, Valerius Schoolmaster, wrote two books before his execution, *The Decrease and Decay of the Apostolic Church,* and

31 *Ibid.,* 85.
32 *MQR,* X (1931), 132.
33 *Martyrs Mirror* (1938), 694.

The Proof of Faith. The latter contains this beautiful jewel of a confession:[34]

> If then we are to be saved through God's mercy, we must repent, must be obedient children of God, born again of Him, and must follow Christ in regeneration and the footsteps of faith, through the narrow way unto eternal life. Nor are we then saved through the merit of good works, but by the grace which came through Christ (Eph. 2:5). For though we lived holy, blameless, and perfect in all righteousness (as the Scriptures require), and suffered for the truth a death more bitter than that of Christ (which with us men is impossible), yet we could not be saved through our own good works, but only by God's mercy, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone has wrought out our salvation. And if we sought or placed our salvation in our good works or our sufferings we should commit idolatry, and we were our own idol if we trusted in ourselves. But now our salvation depends only on the mercy of God. . . . Though we should run and follow after ever so well (which is our duty), so that we attained and already had perfection . . . and had done all those things which are commanded us . . . we were yet only unprofitable servants. . . . How much more unprofitable then are we now, with our many defects, though we willingly strive after and should gladly perform that which is good, and are sorry that we are not perfect.

The most distinguished colleague of Menno Simons was the elder named Dirk Philip. In his book, *Regeneration and the New Creature,* Dirk wrote as follows on our need of divine grace:[35]

> But although we as poor unprofitable servants desire to be diligent to do God's will by His grace, yet let no one think or imagine nor say of us that we seek our salvation in any other way than in the grace of God and in the merits of Christ alone. For we firmly believe and openly confess that we are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Apostle Peter confessed to the church at Jerusalem. Therefore we also according to the doctrine of the same apostle place our whole hope in the grace of God.

Pilgram Marpeck (d. 1556), who was sometimes called the "Menno Simons of the South," did not write on the subject of grace. Marpeck's chief struggle was with Casper Schwenckfeld over the necessity of keeping literally the ordinances of Christ. Marpeck insisted over and over that we have both the right and the obligation to set up a church here and now, and must not wait for a less dangerous and costly time to do so. And we have the obligation to observe the Lord's ceremonies such as baptism and the Lord's Supper. The church would be sinning if it followed Schwenckfeld's policy of "standing still." Marpeck admitted that children have the fallen nature of Adam, but, said he, through Christ such nature is not reckoned to their account *(Verantwortung,* 195-200). And as to

34 *Ibid.,* 730, 731.
35 *Enchiridion* (1910), 312

adults, "We have no other basis of comfort than to present [to God] our [spiritual] poverty in all lowliness."[36] The depravity which believers have is "through the grace of Christ not reckoned as guilt."[37] In another context he writes: "We believe only that we have been eternally reconciled through Jesus Christ who is indeed a Savior, even of all men."[37a] Marpeck calls Jesus Christ a "true Mediator, Intercessor, High Priest, and merciful Advocate."[38]

The most outstanding doctrinal writer of the early Hutterian Brethren was Peter Riedemann (1506-1556). In 1540 he wrote a confession of faith, which was printed twenty-five years later (English edition, 1950). As to the matter of salvation by good works Riedemann writes:[39]

> But we confess Christ to be our righteousness and goodness because He himself worketh in us the righteousness and goodness through which we become loved of God and pleasing to Him. For we have no goodness apart from that which He alone worketh in us, although many say that we seek to be good through our own works. To this we say No, for we know that all our works, in so far as it is our work, is naught but sin and unrighteousness. . . . Thus Christ is our righteousness and goodness, and also our life, for not we ourselves live but Christ liveth in us.

In a vivid description of true Christians Menno writes (in *The New Birth*):[40]

> They daily sigh and lament over their poor, unsatisfactory evil flesh, over the manifest errors and faults of their weak lives. Their inward and outward war is without ceasing. Their sighing and calling is to the Most High. Their fight and struggle is against the devil, world, and flesh, all their days, pressing on toward the prize of the high calling, that they may obtain it. So they prove by their actions that they believe the Word of the Lord, that they know and possess Christ in power, that they are born of God and have Him as their Father.

In his *Christian Baptism* Menno explicitly declares:[41]

> We are not cleansed in baptism of our inherited sinful nature which is in our flesh, so that it is entirely destroyed in us, for it remains with us after baptism. But since the merciful Father . . . has graciously given us the most holy faith through His holy Word, therefore we declare in the baptism we receive that we desire to die unto the inherent sinful nature, and destroy it, so that it will no longer be master in our mortal bodies (Rom. 6:12), even though such true believers are often overcome by sin.

And in *The Incarnation of Our Lord,* written many years after *Christian Baptism,* Menno writes thus concerning Christ and His failing children:[42]

36 *Verantwortung* (1929), 184.
37 *Ibid.,* 275.
37a *Ibid.,* 400.
38 *Ibid.,* 556.
39 *Account of Our Religion* . . . (1950), 35, 36.
40 *Op. cit.,* 95.
41 *Ibid.,* 245.
42 *Ibid.,* 827.

> He accepts them in grace to the praise of His Father (Rom. 15:7); he prays for their faults and weaknesses (Rom. 8:7; Heb. 5:10). For they can never be freed from the inherent, impure, wicked nature of their sinful flesh in this life.

Dozens of times Menno, even in passages which speak in the most exultant terms of present victory in Christ, puts in a qualifying phrase which reckons with the fact of human weakness. As to himself he confesses:[43] "I still do sometimes think, speak, and act recklessly—which however I sincerely hate." The Christian's cross "galls and pierces our poor weak flesh."[44] "We must all acknowledge, whoever we are, that we are sinners in thought, word, and deed. Yes, if we did not have before us the righteous Christ Jesus, no prophet or apostle could be saved."[45] Seven years before he died Menno acknowledged the following to his theological critic, Gellius Faber:[46]

> But as to my poor, weak, and imperfect life, I freely confess that I am a poor, miserable sinner, conceived in sin, of sinful seed, and sinfully brought forth. I can say with David that my sins are ever before me. My thoughts, words, and actions convict me. With the holy Paul I observe that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. . . .
>
> I thank my God who made me willing with the holy Paul to hate the evil and to follow the good. And I could wish that I could with my own blood deliver this wicked world from its ungodly and evil nature and gain it to Christ. . . .
>
> He who purchased me with the blood of His love, and called me, who am unworthy, to his service, knows me, and He knows that I seek not wealth, nor possessions, nor luxury, nor ease, but only the praise of the Lord, my salvation, and the salvation of many souls. Because of this, I with my poor, weak wife and children have for eighteen years endured excessive anxiety, oppression, affliction, misery, and persecution. At the peril of my life I have been compelled everywhere to drag out an existence in fear. Yes, when the preachers repose on easy beds and soft pillows, we generally have to hide ourselves in out-of-the-way corners. When they at weddings and baptismal banquets revel with pipe, trumpet, and lute, we have to be on our guard when a dog barks, for fear the arresting officer has arrived. When they are greeted as doctors, lords, and teachers by everyone, we have to hear that we are Anabaptists, bootleg preachers, deceivers, and heretics, and be saluted in the devil's name. In short, while they are gloriously rewarded for their services with large incomes and good times, our recompense and portion must be fire, sword, and death.
>
> Behold, my faithful readers, in such fear, poverty, misery, and danger of death have I, wretched man, performed to this hour . . . the service of the Lord. And I hope through His grace to perform it to His glory as long as I linger in this tabernacle.

Perhaps Menno's clearest recognition that he had feet of clay

43 *Ibid.*, 310.
44 *Ibid.*, 619.
45 *Ibid.*, 1,053.
46 *Ibid.*, 673, 674.

was in his *Confession of the Distressed Christians,* written in 1552 when he was about fifty-six years of age:[47]

> Think not, beloved reader, that we boast of being perfect and without sins. Not at all. As for me I confess that often my prayer is mixed with sin, and unrighteousness with unrighteousness. For by the grace of God I feel, if I but observe the anointing which is in me, when I compare my weak nature to Christ and His commandment, what kind of flesh I have inherited from Adam. If God should judge us according to our deserts, and not according to His great goodness and mercy, then I confess with the holy David that no man could stand before His judgment (Psalm 143:2). Therefore it should be far from us that we should comfort ourselves with anything but the grace of God through Christ Jesus. For He it is, and He alone, . . . who has perfectly fulfilled the righteousness required by God.

It was Menno's full awareness of the reality of human depravity, even in regenerated and sanctified saints, which made him so tender and patient as a shepherd of souls. Note how gently he deals, for example, with the believer who in weakness falls into a secret sin. In his *Instruction on Excommunication* he clearly declares:[48]

> If at any time one should in a carnal abomination sin against God in private (from which may His power preserve us all), and should the Spirit of the grace of Christ, which alone works genuine repentance in us, once more take hold of our heart and grant genuine repentance, in this matter we are not so to judge. For it is a matter between a man and his God. For since it is evident that we seek our righteousness and salvation, the remission of our sins, satisfaction, reconciliation, and eternal life, not in or through the ban, but solely in the righteousness, intercession, merits, death, and blood of Christ, therefore . . . the two objectives for which the ban is commanded in the Scriptures have no legitimate function in this case. . . . We have no binding key of Christ nor any commandment . . . to . . . shame him before the church.

In a similar pastoral spirit Menno gives instruction in his *Reply to False Accusations* on how to deal with a member of the church who falls back into the works of the flesh. He says that the matter should be properly considered; we should not "make a mistake in such a case by premature and unseasonable judgment."[49]

> For the Lord to whom nothing is concealed knows what sin he has committed, whether he has sinned against the Holy Ghost or not. But let them admonish such a one according to the Word of the Lord. If he repents sincerely, if he shows true fruits of repentance according to the Scriptures, if he receives a broken, contrite, and penitent heart once more, and a peaceable, joyful, and cheerful mind, then it is manifest that he did not sin against the Holy Ghost. But if he remains impenitent, continues in his wilfulness, and unto the end wilfully despises Christ and His Word, then . . . his end and reward will be death.[50]

47 *Ibid.,* 506.
48 *Ibid.,* 979.
49 *Ibid.,* 656.
50 *Ibid.,* 656.

In his *Instruction on Discipline to the Church at Franeker,* 1555, Menno wrote in the same tender spirit:[51]

> Lastly, I understand that they hold that if anyone in great weakness falls and openly acknowledges his fall, they should then consider him a worldly person. This again is unheard-of fanaticism. For if the transgression occurred through weakness . . . let us not be too severe with the poor soul. . . . Not the weak but the corrupt members are cut off, lest they corrupt the others.

One final question remains. How do we distinguish between the weak and the corrupt? Menno, we observed, regarded all Christians as in themselves broken, weak, and undone. What is the difference then between the weakness and fallibility of Christ's true saints, and the blameworthy sins of the apostate or of the corrupt member of the church? The answer lies in the basic intention of the person. The true Christian earnestly strives for the attainment of the will of the Lord. He is penitent and sorry for his involuntary failures, while the member who deserves excommunication takes a bold and headstrong attitude toward his evil manner of life. And by this crucial test Menno himself is abundantly vindicated. At the end of one of the sections of the *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* Menno expresses the depth of his love as follows:[52]

> I have served you all with this small talent as I have received it from my God. I wish that I could at some time do it with greater and richer grace to the praise of the Lord. For these things I have renounced name and fame, honor and ease, and all, and have willingly assumed the heavy cross of my Lord Jesus Christ which at times assails my poor weak flesh quite grievously. I seek neither gold nor silver (the Lord knows) but am ready with faithful Moses to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. I also esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for I know what the Scriptures have promised us. This is my only joy and heart's desire: to extend the kingdom of God, reveal the truth, reprove sin, teach righteousness, feed hungry souls with the Word of the Lord, lead the straying sheep into the right path, and gain many souls to the Lord through His Spirit, power, and grace. So would I carry on in my weakness as He has taught me who purchased me, a miserable sinner, with His crimson blood, and has given this mind by the Gospel of His grace, namely Jesus Christ. To Him be praise and glory and the eternal kingdom. Amen.

IV. FULLY JUSTIFIED

Menno Simons found great comfort in the Biblical doctrine of election. Believers may have the assurance that it was God Himself who loved them with an everlasting love. This eternal love of God moved Him to choose us in Christ before the foundation of the

51 *Ibid.,* 1,044. 52 *Ibid.,* 189.

world. Menno seems to have had a sympathetic understanding of the doctrine of election as set forth by the Apostle Paul in Romans 8 and in Ephesians 1. The believer's choice of Christ is seen as the electing love of God coming to fruition in time. We love God because He first loved us. Conversion is not a self-effort to come to Christ. It is rather the evidence that God is moving the sinner toward Himself. This far, and only this far did Menno go. He did not teach double predestination, nor did he absolve unbelievers from responsibility for their sin; rather, he earnestly called upon them to flee to Christ for forgiveness and salvation. A fine illustration of Menno's wholesome reliance on the doctrine of divine election is found in his *Meditation on the Twentfy-Fifth Psalm*:[53]

> O Lord God, Thou hast loved us with an eternal love. Thou hast chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we should be unblamable and holy before Thee in love . . . Thou hast done all this in our behalf in order that we should give the honor to Thy name, and not to ourselves. What do we miserable sinners have of which we may boast? What do we have that we have not received of Thee? . . . Thou art ours and we are Thine, in the covenant which Thou hast made with us in Christ without any merit on our part.

After describing his deep spiritual need prior to his conversion Menno added:[54]

> Thus did I, miserable sinner, spend my days and did not, O God of grace, acknowledge Thee as my God, Creator, and Redeemer, till Thy Holy Spirit taught me through Thy Word and made known to me Thy will, and led me somewhat into Thy mysteries. . . . My sins have separated me from Thee, have hid Thy countenance from me, have deserved Thy wrath. . . . And yet the deeper I am grieved, the more I am consoled by Thy Word, for it teaches me Thy mercy, grace, and favor, and the remissions of my sins through Christ, Thy beloved Son, our Lord. . . . This promise quiets me, . . . gladdens me.

Since saving faith is a gift of God, its possession should make one humble and joyous forever. It is sure proof of God's love. It is a matter of profound gratitude. In the *Foundation,* after speaking of the Gospel truth that all who believe on the Son are possessors of eternal life, Menno exclaims:[55] "These are they who are justified by faith and have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . There is none that can glory in himself touching this faith, for it is the gift of God. . . ." In his book *Christian Baptism* Menno pleads with his readers:[56] "For I do not doubt but that you will confess that the faith that counts with God is a gift of God. . . ." In reference to

53 *Ibid.*, 76.
54 *Ibid.*, 77.
55 *Ibid.*, 116.
56 *Ibid.*, 239, 240.

his own enlightenment he wrote to Gellius Faber:[57] "And so, my reader, I obtained a view of baptism and the Lord's Supper through illumination of the Holy Ghost, through much reading and pondering of the Scriptures, and by the gracious favor and gift of God. . . ." As we saw earlier, to such a merciful, electing God Menno could offer only worship and adoration.

> In this way the merciful Lord through the liberal goodness of His abounding grace took notice of me, a poor sinner, stirred in my heart at the outset, produced in me a new mind, humbled me in His fear, taught me to know myself in part, turned me from the way of death, and graciously called me into the narrow pathway of life and the communion of the saints. To Him be praise forevermore. Amen.[58]

The line of separation between the saved and the lost is determined by that relation to the Lord which is called faith, that faith which is the gracious gift of God. In *The True Christian Faith* Menno comments as follows:[59]

> I have read recently that there is but one good work which saves us, namely faith, and but one sin that will damn us, namely unbelief. I will let this pass without finding fault, for where there is a genuine, true faith, there are also all manner of genuine good fruits. On the other hand, where there is unbelief, there are all manner of evil fruits. Therefore salvation is properly ascribed to faith, and damnation to unbelief.

And faith is not a matter of impersonal truth. It is rather a total giving of the self to the Lord Jesus Christ in surrender and self-commitment. In his essay on Faith in the *Foundation* Menno directs his readers to Christ. To those who repent Christ says:[60]

> Believe the Gospel, that is, fear not. Rejoice and be comforted. I will not punish nor chastise you, but will heal you, comfort you, and give you life. A bruised reed will I not break, and smoking flax will I not quench. . . . I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. By the kindness of my heavenly Father I am come into the world, and by the power of the Holy Ghost I became a visible, tangible, and dying man; in all points like unto you, sin excepted. I was born of Mary, the unpolluted mother and pure virgin. . . . [I was] anointed with the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to give sight to the blind, to open the prison to them that are bound, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. . . . I am the Lamb that was sacrificed for you all. I take away the sins of the whole world. My Father has made me unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. . . .

The salvation which the Lord's saints possess is not destroyed or nullified by their fallibility and weakness. Those who are true

57 *Ibid.*, 669.
58 *Ibid.*, 671.
59 *Ibid.*, 399.
60 *Ibid.*, 115, 116.

believers have as their deepest intention the desire to live a holy life. And although their life is not perfect, their salvation is certain. In his *Reply to False Accusations* Menno asserts:[61]

> But those who are born from above are fearful of all sin. They know by the Law that all which is contrary to the original righteousness is sin, be it inward or outward, important or trifling. Therefore they fight daily with their weak flesh in the Spirit and in faith. They sigh and lament about their errors. . . . They approach the throne of grace daily with contrite hearts and pray: Holy Father, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. They are not rejected by the Lord on account of such lapses, even though they are sinful lapses, which are not committed wilfully and intentionally, but contrary to their will, . . . for they are under grace and not under Law. . . . The seed of God, faith in Christ Jesus, the birth which is of God, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit remain in them. . . . They crucify their lusts as long as they live. They watch and pray incessantly. And although they are such poor, imperfect children, they nevertheless rejoice in the sure trust of the merits of Christ, and praise the Father for His grace.

All the hope and confidence of the believer find their validity in the accomplishment of God's redemption through Jesus Christ. Menno summarizes the truth of this greatest of all miracles, the soteriological incarnation of the Son, in his book, *The Incarnation of Our Lord*:[62]

> The eternal Word of God, by which all things were made, which is the Alpha and Omega, was in time and in the town of Nazareth, according to the predestination of God, according to the decree of God, according to the promise of God, conceived by the Virgin Mary (who knew no man) as flesh or man, was born, and became flesh. John 1:14. According to which flesh conceived in Mary, through the Holy Spirit, of the Father's eternal Word, He in due time was born of the seed or lineage of David, of a woman, of the Virgin Mary, in Bethlehem, as an only-begotten Son of God, according to the promise and the lineage of the mother, also of Abraham, of David, and the seed of the woman, the fruit and son, a Savior of the world, the Lord Himself from heaven, the bread which came down from heaven, Immanuel, the mighty Prince, our God, the Lord our Righteousness. . . .
>
> He is the Man who has victoriously led us poor children, through the merits of His cleansing blood and bitter death, according to the gracious plan . . . of God, His heavenly Father, from the kingdom of hell and from eternal death into the glorious kingdom of His divine honor and eternal peace. Everlasting praise to His illustrious, wonderful, high, and glorious name. Amen.[63]

In another work Menno adds:[64]

> You see, kind reader, we do not seek our salvation in works, words, or sacraments, as do the learned ones, although they accuse

61 *Ibid.*, 564.
62 *Ibid.*, 832.
63 *Ibid.*, 832.
64 *Ibid.*, 504, 505.

us of that very thing; but we seek them only in Christ Jesus and in no other means in heaven or on earth. We rejoice exclusively in this only means. We trust by the grace of God to continue thus unto death.

Again,[65]

We plainly teach that we cannot be saved by outward works, however great and glorious they may appear, or that we can thus entirely please God. For works are always mixed with imperfection and weakness. . . . Therefore we point to Christ Jesus alone, who is our only and eternal righteousness, reconciliation, and propitiation with the Father, and we do not, eternally not, put any confidence in our good works.

We may conclude our survey with a brief summary from Menno's essay of 1552, *Confession of the Distressed Christians:*[66]

For Christ's sake we are in grace. For His sake we are heard. And for His sake our faults and failings which are committed against our will are remitted. For it is He who stands between His Father and His imperfect children, with His perfect righteousness, and with His innocent blood and death, and intercedes for all those who believe on Him, and who strive by faith in the divine Word to turn from evil, follow that which is good, and who sincerely desire with Paul that they may attain the perfection which is in Christ (Phil. 3:12). . . . We are to be saved solely by grace through Christ Jesus.

We close this essay with an appropriate prayer from Menno:[67]

May the merciful gracious Father, through His beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, grant us all the gift of His Holy Spirit, that we may sincerely believe and confess this before-mentioned grace in and through Christ; and that we may walk and abide therein firmly and faithfully unto the end, to the eternal praise and glory of God. Amen.

65 *Ibid.*, 654.
66 *Ibid.*, 506.
67 *Ibid.*, 508.

MUKYOKAI-SHUGI
A MODERN JAPANESE ATTEMPT TO COMPLETE THE REFORMATION

PAUL PEACHEY*

One of the truly creative movements in modern Christianity is *Mukyokai-shugi,* the "Churchless Christianity" of Japan. Arising some fifty years ago, in part as a protest to the denominationalism and the Western cultural garb with which missionaries introduced the Gospel in Japan, this movement expresses and perpetuates itself through small Bible study groups gathered around a *sensei* or teacher. All organization and registration of membership are avoided. Therefore no clear picture of the extent of the movement is available. Informed people have felt that fifty thousand "adherents" might be a reasonable estimate, but this is discounted by some of their leaders, and admittedly any figure is purely conjectural.

For the Christian church generally Mukyokai-shugi has a twofold significance. (1) It represents an "indigenous" expression of Christianity in one of the "mission" lands, at a time when indigenous expressions are still more often a desideratum than an actuality. (2) This movement presents a telling critique of Protestantism, with some highly original answers of its own.

The second point is of particular importance to readers of this journal. For the "founder" of the movement, Kanzo Uchimura (1861-1930) held that the sixteenth century Reformation ended as an "arrested movement."[1] In his life and work, therefore, he championed a "Re-reformation." "The new Protestantism," he asserted, "must be perfectly free without a trace of ecclesiasticism in it—a fellowship, not an institution—free communion of souls, not a system or an organization. Practically, it will be churchless Christianity, calling no man bishop or pastor, save Jesus Christ, the Son of God."[2]

Uchimura was the son of one of the *samurai* or warriors whose class was uprooted in the Meiji revolution that opened Japan to the West a century ago. This background endued him with rugged discipline and intense national pride. As the convert of an American missionary he was early alienated by the notion of Christianity's being divided into denominations and the tendency among missionaries to disparage Japanese culture in comparison with their own.

* Paul Peachey, who is on leave of absence from the faculty of Eastern Mennonite College, recently spent three years in Japan as a representative of the Mennonite Central Committee.

1 *The Bible Studies,* April 1928.
2 *Ibid.*

With great eagerness, nonetheless, he set out as a young Christian for study in America. He held a rather utopian expectation of the quality of Christian faith and life in America, only to be deeply disillusioned by his actual experiences there. Indeed, had it not been for some outstanding Christian individuals who crossed his path, notably President Julius Seelye of Amherst College, one wonders whether his faith would have survived. Eventually he laid radical hold of the (Protestant) principle of justification by faith, and sought to reject everything from Christian practice which did not immediately flow from it. This, then, was the spirit in which he returned to Japan in 1888.

As Uchimura developed his vision of a "Re-reformation" it appears that he was totally unaware of efforts in the "left wing" of the Reformation in the time of Luther to accomplish this very thing. He did have some contact with a few Quakers in Philadelphia. What influence Quakerism may have had on his ecclesiology remains to be studied.

Phenomenologically, the movement Uchimura initiated would fall somewhere between Quakerism and Anabaptism. Like the Quakers, though not entirely for the same reasons, Mukyokai-shugi rejects clergy, hierarchy and sacraments. Like the Anabaptists, Mukyokai-shugi is Bible-centered rather than dependent on the "inner light." Likewise emphasis is strong on the cross and suffering. Membership is less formal than in either Anabaptism or Quakerism. Baptism and communion may be accepted in individual cases, but only with the clear understanding that these are not a means to grace and are not bound to clergy or hierarchy.

Like Anabaptism and Quakerism, Mukyokai-shugi lays great stress on its "lay" character. The church assumes the form of a Bible class, though it is insisted that even this class is non-ecclesiastical. Nevertheless the Biblical idea of the church (as understood by Mukyokai believers) is affirmed; but the church must always be accepted as a spiritual reality in Christ and not an empirical institution. The teachers are for the most part fairly sophisticated Bible scholars, using the tools of critical Biblical scholarship and sometimes publishing exegetical magazines on a purely personal basis. On the other hand, their approach to the Bible is marked by deep reverence and piety. Hence they would reject both the term liberal and the term Fundamentalist in describing their own position, although they claim to be orthodox in doctrine.

Mukyokai-shugi appears to make its strongest appeal among

intellectuals, though some evangelists also do effective work in small towns, and rural areas. One of its major strongholds is Tokyo University, the top educational institution in Japan. The most influential of the contemporary leaders is Dr. Tadao Yanaihara who retired nearly three years ago from the presidency of that university. During the late war he lost his position in the Economics Faculty because of his criticism of the Tojo regime. Despite constant harassment, however, he refused to the end to give up his evangelistic work. After 1943 his Biblical monthly, *Kashin (Glad Tidings),* was refused a license, but he continued to print and to mail out 1,200 copies monthly.

In 1956, at the time of the annual memorial service held on the anniversary of Uchimura's death, Dr. Yanaihara delivered several popular lectures which he entitled *The Unique Non-Church Christian Movement in Japan.* It is customary in Japan to observe death anniversaries, and in the case of Mukyokai the annual meeting constitutes perhaps the only visible link among the various teachers and classes. These lectures, hitherto unpublished in English, were translated by a young high-school teacher in Tokyo, who is a convert of Yanaihara's, named Shoji Taniguchi. They provide an excellent description of the spirit of Mukyokai-shugi as it emerged historically, as well as a glimpse into the present self-interpretation of a representative leader. Dr. Yanaihara and his translator kindly agreed to permit these lectures to be published as an introduction of Mukyokai-shugi to the readers of this journal, but unfortunately space limitations make it possible to present only certain key sections.

Two qualifying remarks are in order. It should be noted first that no one can speak officially for the movement. In fact, Mukyokai leaders hesitate to write general interpretive articles for Western readers because such writings have at times been misconstrued. It should be noted further that certain things are inevitably lost in translation and that Mukyokai-shugi, when detached from its Japanese setting, cannot be fully understood.

The purpose of this presentation is not to give a critique of the movement but rather to introduce it. The point on which the Mukyokai brethren are criticized most severely is that their strictures against church organization are such as to virtually deny the church as an historical reality. Perhaps indeed their case is somewhat overstated or at least misstated. And yet in the end their position is more consistent than that of the typical Protestant distinction between the visible and the invisible church.

Yanaihara first treats "the non-church Christian movement from the standpoint of the history of religious reformation." Without attempting an inclusive survey he traces a spiritual line from Jeremiah through Jesus, Paul and Luther to Kanzo Uchimura. Yanaihara thus postulates the recurrent need for faith and spiritual reality to break through the shell of religious forms afresh. "Thus amidst the failure of King Josiah's attempted reforms, Jeremiah's revelation of a new spiritual faith grew ever stronger in his heart." Here he quotes the passage regarding the breaking up of the fallow ground (Jer. 4:1-3) and then the great words pertaining to the new heart as contrasted to the heart of stone (31:31-34), which words Yanaihara regards as "powerful and revolutionary."

Jesus

Jesus is the key figure in the history of religious reform.

> When we say Jesus completed the law by destroying it, the law is viewed from two viewpoints. Destroying the law is destroying the outward shell of the law, while completing the law is completing the true spirit of law. When the outward shell of the law suffocates life, the law cannot be saved without destroying the outward shell. This is how Jesus accomplished a great religious reformation. It also means that Jesus accomplished the promise of reformation that Jeremiah had prophesied. The spirit of religious reformation and its practice which showed itself not only in Jeremiah but also in the prophecies of the Old Testament reached its climax in Jesus. After Jesus there followed a train of religious reformers whose spirits and works originated in Jesus. All reformations of the Old Testament pointed toward Jesus, while those of the New Testament came from Jesus. Jesus always stood at the peak of the history of religious reformation. The reason is that Jesus not only preached the necessity of the forgiveness of sins, but also has really declared the forgiveness of sins. Moreover, Jesus not only preached the joy of the resurrection, but also was raised himself, which gave people the life of resurrection. This is the reason why Jesus is the Christ or the Savior, and why he is the center and origin of religious reformations of all times.

Paul

While Paul is of course dependent on Christ, it is due to him, says Yanaihara, that the "gospel of Christ had width and depth for the new age." In his contest with the Judaizers the great truth of justification by faith becomes clear (Rom. 3:28) as well as the fulfillment of the law in love (Rom. 3:28). "In the letters of Paul the first half of every letter sets forth the negation of law and true freedom by faith, while the latter half sets forth an ethic in which we can really love others by this freedom."

Luther

Yanaihara then moves to Luther in whom he sees "the same spirit of Paul's reformation," based on Romans 3:28 ("A man is justified by faith apart from works of law.").

> The central themes of the Lutheran reformation were the following three: (1) a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law; (2) priesthood of all believers based on the first point so that not the priests but also the lay believers have the qualifications and responsibility for missionary work among all seekers; (3) the German people as such are God's elect and must establish the spirit of nationalism and the political basis for liberty and independence. . . .
>
> Luther accomplished one of the greatest works in the history of religious reformation. Nevertheless it was not a thorough-going reform. He left the Roman Catholic church and advocated the priesthood of all believers, but did not deny the church system. He established the national church system as "Landeskirche"; preserved the system of the priesthood, and maintained a ritual or sacrament by priests. Compared with the Roman Catholic church in which the Pope holds the supreme position of the priesthood as ecclesiastical authority, the Lutheran church differs only from a Roman Catholic church in that the King designates the head of ecclesiastical authority. The priestly system of bishop and minister are left as they were. As for the sacraments, some . . . were abolished but others were continued. . . . *In other words, from the standpoint of spiritual reformation, it ended up as a half-way reformation* [*Italics added*].

Uchimura

Kanzo Uchimura appeared about four hundred years after the death of Luther. The non-church Christian movement of Kanzo Uchimura is a religious reformation. Judging from the historical current of religious reformation, he is of the stream of Jeremiah, Jesus, Paul and Luther. The truth of God concerning salvation flows in an underground stream and gushes forth in different countries at various times. The reason why a religious reformation is carried out is that it meets the needs of the times. Whenever the church degenerates into formalism and loses its life with the change of the times, God chooses a favorable time and country and seeks to renew the old and eternal truth again.

At the beginning of the twentieth century God selected Japan and made the person of Kanzo Uchimura carry out another religious reformation, by which God had him propagate the truth of salvation for the world with new energy and life. I hope that this is our non-church movement. . . .

Let me enumerate the main points of the non-church Christianity of Kanzo Uchimura. First, he emphasized the salvation of the Gentiles. None need imitate the life and thought of Americans, Englishmen or any other foreigners. We believe in Christ with the Japanese mind.

Secondly, a man is not saved by law, institution, or tradition, but is born again by faith in Christ. In other words, we must worship God not by institution or tradition but in spirit and truth. Therefore we need neither receive baptism, nor be a member of the church, nor attend communion service in order to receive the salva-

tion of Christ. Even though we receive baptism or communion, we need not have it done by a qualified person confirmed by the church, but anyone can do it. . . .

Thirdly, Mr. Uchimura attacked and criticized the depravity and corruption of politics and society on the basis of faith. In other words he criticized actual society with the same faith as Jeremiah, Jesus, Paul and Luther. This brought him ridicule and persecution by the world. Since our faith is not a closed ideological and metaphysical system, but an overflowing living spirit for the salvation of the world and persons, it is natural that there should come forth a prophetic and patriotic criticism of the actual world, that our country will perish if it does not follow justice and righteousness. . . .

The Points of Dispute Between Non-Church and Church

In a second chapter Yanaihara elaborates a comparison of non-church and church on two points, namely salvation as related to the church and sacraments. He holds that Paul took

> the intrinsic nature of ecclesia as a co-operative life identified with Christ. . . . In this sense, if ecclesia designates the whole centering around Christ in spiritual faith, it is natural that seceders from it should perish like withered branches which fall away from the living trunk. In this sense it is right that "there is no salvation outside (the) ecclesia."

But this, says Yanaihara, is not the organized church. This he sees not "as a co-operative body of spiritual life composed of the branches of Christ, but simply the church as an organization established on tradition." To claim that membership in this organization is essential to salvation constitutes the same threat to spiritual reality as did the attempt to make the Mosaic law mandatory following the establishment of the new covenant. Consistently, however, he sees that even non-churchism might pose a similar threat.

> In the same way, those who have faith in non-church Christianity must also see that there is no salvation in the non-church movement itself. The non-church believer also holds meetings. If those who come to their meeting—even though it were a meeting of members—held that outside their circle there were no salvation, this would be nothing less than churchism. On the contrary, if even those who belong to an organized church can understand that holding membership in a church has no special meaning for salvation other than an expediency, and that salvation depends solely upon faith, they are branches of Christ. Salvation is not a matter of membership in the church or the non-church . . . but always and absolutely a matter of faith. This is the emphasis of the non-church Christian movement.

The attitude toward sacraments is similarly ambivalent. Yanaihara holds that "it is debatable whether or not the Bible teaches that we ought to receive the Sacraments of the church today as an order of faith." In any case, Christ's teachings summed up in the

first and second commandments are basic, while those pertaining to baptism and the communion service are secondary. Non-use of the sacraments is inspired by the conviction that their practice characteristically leads to abuse. And yet "I dare not say that we must not accept baptism or communion." In case they are received, however, "whether the qualifications necessary for a pastor are present or not is of no consequence. Anyone can perform the rite as long as he is in faith."

The Principle and Practice of the Non-Church Christian Movement

In a third section Yanaihara sets forth positively the central characteristics of Mukyokai-shugi. This we can give only in the words of his own summary, to be followed, however, with a few comments drawn from the main body of his treatment.

> The first [principle] is the standpoint of the pure Gospel that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of law or system. A man is never saved by the principle of non-churchism. If we were saved by it, there would be little difference from the viewpoint that we are saved by churchism. On the contrary we are saved only by a true and sincere faith. This principle shows that a special priesthood is not necessary for evangelism, and is demonstrated in the practice of lay activity.
>
> The second one is that non-church Christianity promotes racialism in the good sense of the word. This appears on the surface as the spirit of independence of all races, and contributes greatly to the rise of a people.
>
> Nevertheless the third one is that non-church Christianity is not a religion peculiar to a people. Mr. Uchimura used the term of 'Japanese Christianity,' but this does not mean a Christianity peculiar to Japan only. The Gospel gives independence to any nation in the world and has the power to make any nation know the salvation of God. This is the reason why non-church Christianity is a universal, human and world religion.
>
> The fourth one is that non-church Christianity has a prophetic spirit. In the non-church movement spiritual faith is inseparably related to prophecy and warning concerning the destiny of the world and human race, and its future on the basis of the judgment of God. If the non-church movement does not evade the real problems of society and is the salt of the earth or the light of the world, it can become a significant factor in religious reformation. It is not confined to the non-church movement in Japan but may assume an international mission for the peace of the world, or as that which gives the hope of salvation to all races and people in the world. The non-church movement cannot, on the basis of a narrow and limited idea of church organization, spread abroad the Gospel which Jesus himself has vividly manifested by His life. And it must by all means continue to cherish this meaning. Nowadays we face a crisis as to whether the future of the non-church movement will be formally fixed as a kind of churchism or will faithfully continue its influence

on the basis of its eternal and vigorous life. I hope that we non-church members, not conservatively or narrowly but broadly, shall be an active spiritual power for the salvation of the world. You, above all young people, must carefully consider this.

In this summary the second point appears somewhat cryptic. One finds in the tendency of the non-church movement to elevate the role of the nation in the divine scheme, something of the spirit of Luther in his championing of the vernacular as over against the Latin which was foreign to the German people. Uchimura once remarked,

> A Japanese by becoming a Christian does not cease to be Japanese. On the contrary, he becomes more Japanese by becoming a Christian. A Japanese who becomes an American or an Englishman, or an amorphous universal man, is neither a true Japanese nor a true Christian. . . . Was not Latin Christianity a happy fusion of the Christian faith and the old Roman spirit? Was not Luther's German Christianity a valuable and distinct contribution to Christianity? So then, pray be careful lest you call your American or English Christianity a universal religion, and condemn my Japanese Christianity as national and sectional. . . .[3]

Far from chauvinism, therefore, we have here the profound realization that the Christian faith must always express itself through the cultural genius of a people in whose midst it is planted rather than through the medium of the foreign culture through which it has come.

Directions of the Non-Church Evangelism

In a final section Yanaihara deals with Mukyokai-shugi in terms of its evangelistic dimension. In an earlier context he had already indicated that "everyone is an evangelist of the Gospel in the non-church Christian movement."

> The Gospel may be preached whenever there is opportunity in homes, at places of work and in the neighborhood. In the non-church Christian movement evangelism at home and at the place of work is the most important way of preaching the Gospel. The non-church movement does not adopt the methods of so-called "mass evangelism." Rather its method is to gather three or five believers together at home or at a place of work to study the Bible. As it develops into a kind of cell, it permeates society. . . .
>
> The reasons for many lay evangelists in the non-church movement are the following two points. First, most believers of non-church Christianity of necessity must have the enthusiasm and will to spread the Gospel of Christ. This shows that the faith of the non-church movement is a living thing. The fact that it is a living thing makes us desirous of not keeping it to ourselves but letting it flow out to others.

3 *The Japan Christian Intelligencer,* May 1926.

> Moreover from the viewpoint of method, non-church evangelism has another strong point. It emphasizes the study of the Bible. The evangelism of the church with its stress on sermons has a weakness, namely, that if a preacher is not a great thinker he runs short of topics for his sermons and cannot keep the interest of hearers. On the other hand, the non-church method is that evangelism is the study of the Bible. There is no shortage of preaching because only Bible study is evangelism. Moreover evangelism has a living power because the Bible is not the word of man, but the word of the Bible in itself tells the truth. Non-church evangelism is evangelism which the Holy Spirit performs through the medium of the Bible, not through the thought or sermon of man. Even though we use the *sensei's* (teacher's) books or magazines for evangelism, the way of evangelism is still study. . . .
>
> Thus, non-church Christian activity is not only the sensei's meeting, and the publication of his books, but also those who have been taught by their sensei organize their own Bible class or simply publish or mimeograph their own private magazines. In this way at places of work, at school, at home, non-church evangelism is expanding. There is probably nothing comparable with this in the church, except the communist cell as a branch organization.
>
> A communist cell is organized by central instruction and obeys the central control. The Bible study groups of the non-church movement, on the one hand, spontaneously arise out of centering in one believer. In other words, it is neither established by central instruction and control, nor do any liaison organizations exist among the groups. In short, there is not organization, and every believer who is a branch of Jesus as the head is an independent evangelist. There is no visible, concrete organization in the various groups of all sizes except the unity given by the invisible Spirit.

These few comments and excerpts are insufficient to convey the depth and richness of Mukyokai-shugi—as well as the inadequacies which always accompany human endeavor. Enough has been said, however, to indicate the desirability for a deeper encounter between Mukyokai-shugi and Western Christians, particularly those within the "left wing" of the Reformation.

English literature on the subject is still greatly limited. Uchimura wrote in English with a pungent style all his own. Two separate editions of his works (in Japanese) have appeared, including also his English writing. In neither case, however, were all his English works included.

One of the contemporary sensei, Kokichi Kurosaki, has published in English a very enlightening little book entitled *One Body in Christ* (Kobe; Eternal Life Press, 1954). A fair and informative secondary work is: Raymond P. Jennings, *Jesus, Japan and Kanzo Uchimura,* Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1958). Coming soon is a biographical study of Uchimura by John F. Howes, with a collection of his letters edited by Otis Cary, entitled, *Japan's Modern Prophet: Uchimura Kanzo,* to be published by the Amherst College and Doshisha University Presses.

BOOK REVIEWS

A REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Siegfried Rother, *Die religiösen und geistigen Grundlagen der Politik Huldrych Zwinglis: Ein Beitrag zum Problem des christlichen States.* No. 7 in Erlanger Abhandlungen zur mittleren und neueren Geschichte, Neue Folge: Erlangen 1956. Pp. 149. DM 8.50

Heinrich Schmid, *Zwinglis Lehre von der göttlichen und menschlichen Gerechtigkeit.* No. 12 in Studien zur Dogmengeschichte und systematischen Theologie. Zürich 1959. Pp. 269. Sfr. 17.-

Christian thought in our age is peculiarly preoccupied with the problems arising out of the impossibility of managing a society according to the simple ethical idealism which an earlier generation thought it could attribute to the "historical Jesus." In marked contrast to other ages, for the first time since Tertullian the major theological options of our time may best be classified in terms of their *ethical* import; Reinhold Niebuhr's call to maintain a constant tension between love and justice, the renewed "vocational" emphasis of traditional Calvinist or Lutheran Protestantism, the occasionalism called forth by today's existentialist temper, the norm-related emphases of the Pietist and Puritan traditions.

The theological analysis which proceeds by correlating theological emphases and social strategies, which owes so much to the example—as well as to the choice of materials—of Ernst Troeltsch, has however not been exhausted by its production of this fruitage in the theological and ethical realm. Scholarship solidly within the historical disciplines as well has continued, both in Europe and in America, in the same vein as Troeltsch but with greater concentration, to interpret theologies in terms of the socio-ethical realities they undergird and which in some sense called them forth.

Few historic figures are more challenging for such an analysis than Huldrych Zwingli, who in spite of the brevity of his career and the fragility of his own synthesis was the father of Reformed Protestantism. The end-product of the work of Bucer, the mediator with Lutheranism; Bullinger, the pastoral administrator; and Calvin, the systematizer, may have been more viable—and even more doctrinally correct—than was the Zwinglian synthesis of Swiss patriotism, classical Humanism, and immediate prophetic certainty; but it was also less vital and less interesting. Nowhere is his originality more striking or more inimitable than in his work *On Divine and Human Justice,* a tract based on a sermon preached in late June of 1523.

Since the favorable outcome of the disputation of January 29, 1523, one of the major themes in Zwingli's redoubled preaching of social renewal was the immorality of the tithes and interest by which the maintenance of the monasteries and many a priest's living were largely assured. Thesis 67 of the articles *(Schlussreden)* proposed by Zwingli for the disputation had expressed his willingness to discuss further concerning "interests, tithes, unbaptized children, and confirmation," issues concerning which he differed from tradition without desiring to bring them to the forefront of the debate.[1] In the *Exposition* of the 67 articles published later in the spring he further indicated, without extensive argument, that the only reasons which kept him and other preachers from

1 *Huldrych Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke* (Leipzig, 1905ff) (henceforth referred to as *ZW*). II, p. 465 14ff.

attacking the interest system head-on were their respect for order and their fear of jeopardizing church income.[2]

Zwingli held the charging of any interest—and not only of excessive rates—to be immoral by virtue of express prohibitions in the Old and New Testaments[3] but, even more, because of the very nature of the Law of Love.

> God wills to reveal Himself to all creatures and to do good to them without recompense, is not selfish nor changeable. He thus demands that we be like Him, for He speaks: "You shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5). Would we come into His presence, we must be perfect, i.e., pure, clean, beautiful, unblemished, not thinking of ourselves as being our own, but knowing that we belong to God; and if to God, then also to the neighbor.[4] God commands us to give our goods to those from whom we can hope nothing and who cannot recompense us (Luke 6). He himself does the same; for He nourishes not only men but also the birds of the air (Matt. 6) without any return.[5]

Thus profoundly does Zwingli reason with ethics as a reflection of God's nature. This is no left-over Erasmian or mystical humanism, conceiving of man as by nature a partaker of the divine essence; this is Gospel, the righteousness of God in Christ as revelation of what man should be. This, as much as late medieval mysticism, is the origin of the *Nachfolge* motif which Anabaptism was later to develop at greater length.[6]

To charge interest not only falls short of the divine righteousness; it is concretely a sin calling for exclusion from the Lord's Supper.[7]

It need hardly be said on what fertile ground such teaching fell, even though it was only incidental to the theme of the disputation and the *Exposition*. Suffering under the inordinate burdens of civil and ecclesiastical tithes which were soon to call forth outright rebellion all over German Europe, the peasants were all too ready to pick up the hint of social readjustments which might be called for by the rediscovery of the pure Gospel. Fed by zealous followers of Zwingli like Wilhelm Röubli and Andreas Castelberger who preached on the housetops what Zwingli told them in secret,[8] the unrest centered especially in the villages whose tithes

2 *ZW* II, 45f.
3 Exodus 22:25; Luke 6:35
4 *ZW* II, 522, lines 12ff.
5 *ZW* II, 480, lines 16ff.
6 The divine nature as described in *ZW* II, 479 ff. discusses God as Creator and Sustainer, and His will for men as revealed by Jesus as Teacher. Neither on God's side (i.e., the revelation of the divine nature which men should imitate) nor on man's has the work of Christ an essential relation to the content of ethics. Elsewhere however Zwingli speaks in a more Christological way, more related to later Anabaptist developments. "To be a Christian is not to talk about about Christ, but to walk as He walked (*ZW* III, 407, line 18)"; "to 'follow Him' means doing as He did (II, 130, line 2; this passage deals with the Christian's crossbearing)." A Christian should walk "according to the form of Christ" (III, 380 f; cf. the Schuler-Schulthess edition of Zwingli's works. VI, p. 6).
7 Zwingli attempted to include a church discipline, excluding usurers from communion, as part of the ordea of worship prepared for the introduction of the Lord's Supper in April 1525, only to be frustrated by the Council. The sequence of events is described in Roger Ley, *Die Kirchenzucht bei Zwingli* (Zürich, 1948), p. 38, especially note 1. A more general survey of the issues is given by Ernst Ramp, *Das Zinsproblem* (Zürich, 1949). Karl Holl demonstrates (*"Die Kulturbedeutung der Reformation."* in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* I, 3d edition [Leipzig, 1923], pp. 500ff) that a rejection of interest was common to all the Reformation, and continued to be effective in Calvinism for decades. Whether it is a sin to lend at interst is not our theme here; for purposes of the present discussion with Zwingli we assume that it is.
8 In the introduction to Zwingli's writing, Emil Egli gathers together (*ZW* II, 462) the evidences of other attacks against tithes and interest. He errs in attempting to distinguish systematically between Zwinglian "evangelicals" or "believers" on one hand, and "radicals" or potential Anabaptists on the other, who were attacking the tithes. This is an untenable

were owed to the chapter of Zwingli's own Grossmünster. Röubli was himself preaching at Wytikon, one of these villages. Proceeding in an orderly, respectful fashion, these villages sent delegates to Milords of the Zürich Council asking for relief:

> [they] have been informed and taught by the Gospel that the tithe is nothing but an alms; it is known that some of the canons use the tithes for useless and wasteful things. In addition they [i.e., "we"—the complainants speak of themselves in the third person] must give money for every sacrament and such things as bellringing, baptisms, and burials. . . . They are of good hope that Milords will give ear to their complaints, also the abuses which are practiced with the tithes, and come to the aid of their poor subjects.[9]

To this overture, as to others of its kind which continued to come to the Council during the next two years as the impact of Zwinglian preaching reached different parts of the countryside, the Council responded with a clear negative, by a decision of June 22, 1523. Two days later Zwingli preached his sermon on "On Divine and Human Justice and how they see [i.e., agree] and stand together," which was printed as a pamphlet a month later. This sermon is Zwingli's response to a serious disappointment.[10] It is not a poised, maturely weighed platform for a reformed social ethic, though it has been taken as such, but rather a heroic effort to adjust to the facts of life. Thus far the Council had moved with Zwingli, step by step, in the direction of Reformation.[11] Now, as

anachronism, since the first signs we have of any serious differences between Zwingli and some of his followers are from December 1523, arising around a liturgical-religious and not an economic-ethical issue (cf. our "Turning Point in the Zwinglian Reformation," *MQR* XXXII [1958], pp. 128ff). But beyond its anachronism, Egli's sketch of the context of *Divine and Human Justice* is flatly incorrect in associating the Anabaptists with the rejection of the tithes and Zwingli with their retention. In December 1524 Zwingli's *Who Gives Cause for Disorder* distinguished clearly between the economic radicals and the advocates of church discipline; the latter, not the former, were the proto-Anabaptists. Attacks against the tithes continued to come not from Anabaptist but from Zwinglian preachers on into 1526 (cf. von Muralt and Schmid, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz*, I [Zürich, 1952], pp. 186f, where four preachers, not Anabaptists, were reported as preaching against the tithes in early 1526). The assumption that the Anabaptists are the type *par excellence* of ethical radicalism has led Egli, reasoning à la Troeltsch, to a misapprehension not only of Zwingli's own position but even of what the issues were. The Anabaptists do not belong anywhere in a discussion of *Of Divine and Human Justice;* it is a theological problem within Zwinglianism.

9 Emil Egli, *Actensammlung zur Geschichte der Zürcher Reformation*, No. 368, p. 132.

10 Conrad Grebel's letter of July 15, 1523, to Vadian is inexplicable unless one assumes that he and Zwingli were agreed in their views on the Council's ruling. He is unhappy with the action taken, but agrees with Zwingli, as he was also to do in October, that the Council has authority to take such action. After saying that the city fathers should be called "decimating fathers" (perhaps a Latinization of a German pun between *Zunftherren* and *Zinsherren* or *Zehentherren*), Grebel assures his brother-in-law, "Perhaps you do not believe it; but I believe it, for I see it with my eyes; furthermore you should learn about it from Zwingli, who is concerned about it (*curatus*), and who can explain everything to you more easily than the poor babbler I am" (von Muralt and Schmid *op. cit.*, p. 2). Egli, by reversing in his introduction the order of events, reporting on Zwingli's reasons for the June 24 sermon before describing the Council's earlier action, manages to leave the reader with the impression that Zwingli himself, clearly not agreeing with the complaining villages, had given the Council through this sermon instruction as to how to act. This chronological distortion is again also a distortion of understanding. In 1523 Zwingli, though accepting the authority of the Council over such matters (as did also Grebel, Stumpf, Röubli and the complaining villages), did not identify himself with the state nor give it instruction as was the case a few years later. *Of Divine and Human Justice* does not instruct the state; it instructs Christians about how to understand the fact that the state does not apply the standards of the Gospel. Egli's constant effort to project backwards into mid-1523 the division of late 1524 between Zwingli and those who were to become the Anabaptists has led to a distortion of the events of 1523. This distortion is furthered by reporting at this point, in explanation of the June events (*ZW* II, 466), a conversation between Zwingli and Simon Stumpf which cannot be dated before November 1523.

11 Cf. the article, "The Turning Point . . ." cited above, p. 130.

was to be the case again in October and in December, it refused to take the next step. Should he give up his confidence in Milords of Zürich as agents of his reformation? Or should he change his understanding of the reformation which he wanted them to implement? This latter task is what he takes up in this sermon.

The Structure of Zwingli's Compromise[12]

God's righteousness or justice is at once what God is and does and what He demands. The correspondence between God's claims upon man and His own nature, already illustrated above, does not only apply to giving without hope of return; it is the general view of Zwingli on the content and the bindingness of all of Christian ethics. God "demands by word and by the example of His deeds"[13] that men be like Him. The atonement of Christ is needed because of our sinful inadequacy, but this brings with it no lowering of the norms. The Sermon on the Mount, from which Zwingli draws ten characteristics of "divine righteousness,"[14] is at once a description of God's behavior and a rule for men.[15]

But we do not keep this law. In order to prevent our sins from completely destroying society, God has therefore set up a second (and even in fact a third) level of "righteousness" for this world. This second level is lower, and its being placed there assumes that the first level will not be kept. Thus each of the ten aspects of God's will can be broken down into three degrees. For example:

(A) Thou shalt not covet. This is the demand of divine righteousness. If it were obeyed, there would be no occasion for the further steps.

(B) Thou shalt not steal. This is needed to protect society only because command *A* is not obeyed. Those who refrain from theft are not thereby just before God; they may be covetous hypocrites, but they respect civil order. If they do this there is no need for *C;* i.e.,

(C) He who steals shall be legally punished. The identical three levels of "justice" are worked out in strict logical parallel, with each backed by a proof text, for all ten of the aspects of righteousness listed earlier. This exposition is the major body of the tract.

In historical perspective, the chief significance of this approach to the problems of ethics in society is its originality in contrast to the classical Roman Catholic and Lutheran patterns. The highest level of love, truthfulness, altruism, etc., is not relegated to the cloister or the "heart," while elsewhere a different, lower-level Will of God applies. The highest, divine righteousness is what should always be preached and what men shall be judged by. It is the standard by which the true believer shall be inwardly guided. The lower level of "human righteousness" is only the result of sin; no "order of creation" fixes its norms, no divinely mandated prince defines its duties. God's highest Law is not, as it tended to be in Lutheranism, removed from the realm of social ethics to serve only as a proclamation of men's inadequacy. Zwingli claims for the ethic of divine justice (which for him is largely the Sermon on the Mount) a

12 The term "compromise" is used here in a descriptive, not a pejorative sense.

13 *ZW* II, 481, line 15; cf. 476, line 8.

14 Unconditional forgiveness, no wrath, no demanding on's rights, chastity even in thoughts, no oath but absolute veracity, unconditional giving, loving one's enemies, no coveting, no vain words, loving the other as oneself. *ZW* II, 479f. (The exposition in the following paragraphs follows the sequence of the original; no further source references will be indicated). This same sequence of ten dimensions of divine justice is followed several times in the remainder of the booklet.

15 Each of the ten facets is illustrated by a proof text or an indication of God's own exemplary obedience to the principle.

relevance which was to be denied by subsequent Protestant theology until the age of Liberalism, yet he does so without expecting society to live by this high standard.

The exposition then moves on to the function of the state, as related to the three levels of righteousness. The state has no jurisdiction over the divine righteousness, which is on the level of the will. Should it attempt to govern in this domain, i.e., to dictate in matters of faith, the faithful should resist, to the death if need be. "Those who believe the Word of God should rather suffer death than budge from it [i.e., from the Word of God]. If they do not, they are not followers of Christ."[16] Such interference with preaching and the conscience as would force Christians to resist is the only possible involvement of the state with the inner realm; it can punish wrong behavior, but cannot detect wrong thoughts.

The careful reader will have noted here a shift in Zwingli's thought. In the first part of the pamphlet[17] his concern was with differing *ethical* levels; the one that of perfect love *(A)*, the other a tolerable hemming-in of sin *(B)*. Both were concrete, visible ethical possibilities. Speaking the truth without oath, giving without hope of return, and not using the court, all examples of divine justice, are external and visible. Now, however, the difference between the divine and the human levels is being described as the difference between the inner (not subject to external controls) and the outer, or between intention and behavior.

There is another unconscious shift between the two sections of the document. In the major, expository section, "human justice" is given by revelation. Level *B* is just as well illustrated with proof texts as is level *A*. Then in the second section "human jutsice" tends to be replaced by positive law, i.e., by the actual rules promulgated and enforced by a given state authority. There is no evidence that Zwingli was conscious that he thus shifted his frame of reference. In the latter section *Gerechtigkeit* and *Obrigkeit* can be used interchangeably.

In spite of these serious ambiguities, Zwingli's pamphlet says some things about the state clearly, just as we have seen it says some things clearly about ethical dualism. The function by which a state is to be measured is the maintenance of a livable social order, not the establishment of any one pattern of authority. It may consent to compromises, but its standards are fixed by Revelation. If it be ungodly, Christians are to bear the suffering involved as a divine chastisement; they may expect God to punish such a ruler in his turn, but they do not plan a rebellion in order to be the instruments of that judgment. Nowhere does Zwingli's treatment contain the assumption that the Christians whom he is counseling are pious men of state. He looks at problems of state from the position of the subjects, not with a view to the implementation of his principles of social reform from the top. He discusses the obligation to pay tithes and interest, not the authorization for the state, church, or landowner to demand them.

This is basically the view of the state which continued to be held by the Anabaptists. One looks in vain in *Of Divine and Human Justice* for a basis for Zwingli's later theocratic view of state and church. Some am-

16 *ZW* II, 503 lines 14ff. This passage deals with the case where the state opposes true preaching, and not with a case of ethical unrighteousness. It leaves open the possibility that a state might act in this realm, but do so rightly rather than wrongly. In this case its intervention would not be unwelcome to Zwingli; but since what is right for the state to do in this realm is to let the preaching of the Word go unhindered, right government is no government.

17 *ZW* II, pp. 479-493.

biguities are noticeable in his thought which make room for further development, but we have here no holy war mentality, no groundwork for government regulation of family life and church attendance, nor for other earmarks of later Zwinglianism. The explanations for these phenomena must be found later. Only the haste of historians like Egli to prove the unbroken continuity of Zwingli's work and to find in 1523 the roots of the division of 1524/5, abetted by the zeal of typologists like Troeltsch for finding historical incarnations of ideal ethical options, can explain their unanimity in finding in *Of Divine and Human Justice* an advocacy of the State Church and of a pragmatically motivated readiness for any necessary ethical compromise. Zwingli's thought here may be acceptable to the Christian theologian, on Biblical, logical or other grounds, or it may not; in any case let us not confuse the issue by assuming that it is the Zwingli of 1525-1530 who is writing. What he wrote here was acceptable to Grebel, Stumpf, and the others whom Egli calls "radical."

It is thus essential for a clear understanding of Zwingli's thought that its development be followed year by year. This has been the most fruitful innovation in recent studies, such as those of Farner,[18] Ley,[19] and Rich.[20] The same thing needs to be done in an analysis of the basic ethical problem as has been done by these works in a narrower scope.

Relevant Recent Writings

One therefore turns with anticipation to a recent addition to the well-known series of Swiss and German works on the history of doctrine and systematic theology edited by Professors Fritz Blanke and Arthur Rich of Zürich and Otto Weber of Göttingen, in which Heinrich Schmid discusses just this theme. Thorough and measured in its reporting, excellently organized and beautifully printed, Schmid's volume is predestined for a major place in studies of the history of Protestant social ethics. The material is gathered from a wide acquaintance with Zwingli's writings, presented with confidence and an air of competence and apparent agreement, which will go far to convince most readers that Schmid understands Zwingli and that Zwingli is quite right.

Often Schmid is right. When he argues (p. 18) that even Professor Fritz Blanke has not adequately emphasized the common ground between Zwingli and the Anabaptists in their approach to ethics, he is pointing to the same "discipleship" elements in Zwingli's thought which we have already noted. Likewise when he points out (93) that the term "Law of Nature" in Zwingli's thought is not what other thinkers (Catholic, Lutheran or modern) mean by "Natural Law," but rather the Golden Rule; when he sees the Platonic parentage of Zwingli's inner/outer dualism (110f, 193), and when he reiterates (178f) that not only the abuse of the law (or state) but its very existence and normal functioning is a fruit of sin, Schmid has identified characteristically Zwinglian turns of thought where earlier study often wrongly tended to assimilate Zwingli to Luther or Calvin. With few exceptions, the entire work of Schmid merits and rewards the reader's confidence with similarly perceptive interpretation. Yet the few exceptions are significant.

Perhaps the first of these shortcomings deserving mention is the very intention of Schmid to produce a system of ethical philosophy by conflat-

18 Alfred Farner, *Die Lehre von Kirche und Staat bei Zwingli* (Tübingen, 1930).
19 Cf. above, note 7.
20 Arthur Rich, *Die Anfänge der Theologie Zwinglis* (Zürich, 1949).

ing quotations drawn from all periods of Zwingli's thought, under a title drawn from the 1523 tract. Whereas the most illuminating Zwingli research of recent decades has been that which, by careful chronological analysis, found the different periods in his growth, identifying their transitions and overlappings, Schmid not only does not attempt such a work; he, in fact, rejects its results and claims that Zwingli never changed.[21] Phrases gleaned from all over Zwingli's writings are reshuffled and aligned with a new synthetic logical outline. The outline is complete, and logically appropriate, and so worked out that step by step parallels can be drawn to the Thomist philosophy of law; the outline however does not grow out of Zwingli's own way of thinking, and the Thomistic parallels are often only verbal, leading away from Zwingli's own real concerns.

A basic problem already pointed to in understanding Zwingli's thought is to know how he related "Gerechtigkeit" as what God demands of men (even on the lower level (B) accommodated to sin) with "Gerechtigkeit" as what a state requires of its subjects and promises to them. He tries to equate the two, but cannot. Sometimes "human righteousness" is fixed in revelation and testified to in proof texts; at other times it is whatever a state permits. This tension Zwingli does not see. Translating to English we use sometimes "righteousness" or sometimes "justice"; yet for Zwingli, whether he was thinking in Latin or German, the two were verbally identified. Schmid tries to introduce the distinction between "Recht" and "Moral" borrowed from an Italian philosopher of law, but makes no use of the distinction later. It is not clearer at the end of the book than at the beginning, *(a)* on what grounds, revealed or pragmatic, the statesman should make his decision; or *(b)* on what grounds the preacher instructs the statesman. Schmid rejects the view of Walther Köhler, one of the greatest of Zwingli scholars, that Zwingli accepted a compromise between theological and pragmatic considerations (19, 194), yet offers no alternative explanation for the fact that as Zwingli increasingly took the responsibility for a "politics based on revelation" the pragmatic considerations (leading him even to reverse his attitudes toward pensions and toward Swiss Confederacy) were self-evident.

A second weakness of the book is concentrated especially in the introductory chapters. To show the practical significance of the issues at stake in the more abstractly framed body of the work Schmid first relates his theme to the events of June 1523 which led to the writing of *Of Divine and Human Justice.* There he reports that "Anabaptist radicalizing tendencies," understanding Zwingli's preaching in a way he did not intend, were demanding a communistic order, or at least significant movement in that direction. This frightened the state and played into the hands of the Catholic opposition, so Zwingli had to clear things up with his pamphlet.

Nothing is fully accurate about this reconstruction except its admission that the troublemakers considered themselves in line with Zwingli's preaching. Note the following:

(a) The six villages who came before the Council on June 22 were not the same people who later became Anabaptists.

(b) Anabaptism as a separate movement began with the issue of the

21 On p. 171 this denial is addressed to Rich, on p. 320 to Farner. Schmid does not prove that Zwingli never changed by the only way this could be proved, namely by comparing documents from different periods; that the total Zwinglian corpus forms one thought system is rather a postulate of Schmid's whole approach than a result of investigation; he cannot permit himself to examine it carefully.

institution of the Lord's Supper (October-December 1523), with that of church discipline and ultimately that of infant baptism; the issue of tithes did not contribute to the break, since on this point Zwingli continued to be of the same opinion.[22] In the height of his bitter anti-Anabaptist polemic in 1525 and 1527 it never occurred to Zwingli to relate the two sets of issues. He would have had every reason to accuse the Anabaptists of being troublemakers in the economic realm if there had been any plausibility to the claim.

(c) The complaint of the six villages was not communizing in its intent; it raised no question of modifying the property system. In fact even the charging of interest was not rejected except obliquely.[23]

(d) Neither before nor in the pamphlet did Zwingli disown the villages' complaints as not in line with his preaching, nor even as demanding more than proper "human justice."[24]

Having established to his satisfaction the nature of Anabaptism in the stage-setting reference to June 1523, Schmid repeatedly refers to Anabaptists in the course of his systematic exposition. They are not introduced, as are Thomas of Aquinas and sometimes Luther, as worthy advocates of significant alternative social philosophies documented from their writings; they are alluded to, without documentation in most cases, as conventional figures whose sole function in the discussion is to show by contrast how right Zwingli was.

There is nothing intentional in this misrepresentation; Schmid's usage is simply a testimony to the degree to which the systematic discussion of socio-ethical types, in the heritage of Troeltsch, Weber, Köhler and H. R. Niebuhr, has been permitted to stand in the way of historical accuracy. The Anabaptists are no longer historical figures to be studied in their own right; they are paradigms chosen to illustrate a typology, as this is seen from the perspective of those whose presuppositions they challenge. It would be pointless to ask whether Schmid's portrayal of the Anabaptists is accurate; it was not meant to be. They are presented as symbols of what would result, according to Schmid's understanding, from carrying some of Zwingli's ideas to extremes.

A third, more subtle and more disquieting shortcoming of Schmid's work is its pervasive apologetic character. The exposition makes such a persistent argument for the rightness of every facet of Zwingli's thought that it comes as a surprise, logically unexplainable with reference to the body of the book, when the "Epilogue" indicates that Zwinglianism need not be accepted as normative in our day.[25] The criticisms formulated by earlier scholars are taken up and refuted. If Zwingli is inconsistent this is a virtue, either a necessary paradox or tactical mobility. If his pragmatic politics work, this shows Zwingli was right. If they do not, it was either not his fault or his claim was based not on workability but on

22 Cf. note 8 above.

23 The petition cited above, at least as reported by Egli in his collection of sources, does not attack tithes as such but only abuses in their use. That their very existence was an abuse followed from Zwingli's teaching, but was not argued in the petition.

24 In May 1525, in a memorandum evaluating a very similar (but more detailed and more demanding) petition presented to "Milords" by Kyburg and several other villages, Zwingli and his colleagues gave almost complete support to the requests (Egli, *Actensammlung*, No. 724, p. 331f). Had Zwingli been unhappy with the farmers' petitions and happy with the Council's answer in June 1523, it would be inexplicable that similar complaints still kept coming in two full years later: cf. additional such documents in Egli, *Actensammlung*, pp. 729, 737, 756.

25 An earlier reviewer reports the impression "that Schmid is completely convinced of the rightness and appropriateness of Zwingli's doctrine of justice" (*Theologische Zeitschrift*, Basel, January 1960, p. 73).

revelation, and he is again right. The appeal may be to realism or to revelation, as the argument demands; but practically never does Schmid test Zwingli by the yardstick to which the Reformer himself appealed, namely that of Scripture. Schmid's oblivion to the ecumenical dimension of the discipline of historical theology prevents his applying to his hero any standards of evaluation of sufficient objectivity to permit real conversation. Conformity with the Protestant doctrine of grace, or with logic, mobility or consistency, the appeal to effectiveness or to revelation; all are usable and none is a final standard.

It should not be thought that this tendency to apologetics makes the book seriously less useful. It perhaps even heightens its effectiveness in portraying Zwingli's peculiar genius, one major aspect of which was his self-confidence and unawareness of his own shifting or of the serious claims of other positions. It is only when we look for help with contemporary debates in which idealism and pragmatism, the law of nature and the Sermon on the Mount, compromise and the mandate of the state are still the live issues, that Schmid's analysis gives little critical perspective.

The book by Rother is a useful complement to Schmid. Less polished in style and format, less logical in the subdividing and exposition of the material, and less thorough, Rother has the better sense for Zwingli the man and the molder of history. The "religious bases" to which the title refers are just that; not theological ideas but personally experienced religious certainty.

Zwingli's deepest conviction was his awareness of being the tool of the absolutely sovereign God. His strong predestinarian emphasis was driven by a religious, not a logical concern. The grace of the Gospel meant for him the condescending acceptance by God of a powerless creature as His instrument, just as much as it did the sinner's forgiveness. Thus the combination of divine sovereignty and election led not to passivity but to a tremendously powerful sense of being the chosen agent of an invincible cause. "I am taught by Christ himself."[26] "I know that in nearly five years I have preached nothing but the genuine, pure and clear Word of God, the holy Gospel. . . ."[27] Zwingli was confident that he had utterly submitted himself to the divine will, of which he was henceforth a chosen and, as far as doctrine was concerned, a practically infallible instrument.

This view of his prophetic mission goes well beyond a description of average Christian experience. The identity of his message with God's Word was fully valid only for Zwingli himself; for other preachers such an equation could hold only insofar as they agreed with him. The particular calling of the Protestant cantons as bearers of God's cause in analogy to Israel had but faint analogies in Strasbourg or Hesse. Rother's chapters on Zwingli's *Sendungsbewusstsein,* on "The Reformation as a Special Time of Grace," and on "The State in the Service of God's Honor and Lordship" give a clear grasp of the way this heroic sense of mission worked itself out. To what extent Zwingli was right or wrong as a Christian preacher and theologian is another question; in any case this is the real Zwingli; not the careful expositor of a new, more paradoxical theory of socio-ethical compromise, but a new Samuel, prophet and judge in one, refining and molding the covenant people for the greator glory of the Almighty.

26 Rother, p. 34, quoting from the Schuler-Schulthess edition of Zwingli's works, II, p. 48.
27 *ZW* I, 487, quoted in Rother, p. 34.

Rother attempts no thorough chronological analysis, but does point out (108f) the gap between *Of Divine and Human Justice* and Zwingli's later expressions on the State. Whereas this one document, as we have seen, accents the qualitative difference between divine righteousness and human justice, the striking trait of the later Zwingli's thought is how nearly the cause of *his* state approximates that of God. The reason is no longer (as in the 1523 tract) that God is descending to a lower will in order to limit sin; Zwingli's crusade is God's own cause, no mere tolerable compromise, no bare order of conservation. It is with this conviction of the spiritual mandate of the state to go beyond the maintenance of order as envisaged in *Of Divine and Human Justice* (which remained the Anabaptist concept) and become an instrument for molding all society, including the church, according to the divine pattern, at any cost, that Zwingli's theology of the state will stand or fall. Not a theory of compromise, but a vision of theocracy is the issue.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries JOHN H. YODER

EDITORIAL

(Continued from Page 5)

teenth century Anabaptism. It is here published in connection with the current visit to America of a revered leader of this movement, Kokichi Kurosaki.

THE BOOK REVIEW SECTION IN THIS ISSUE CONTAINS AN EXTENSIVE AND PENETRATing examination of two recent publications on Zwingli's political theories which include materials on the relation of the Zürich Anabaptists to the issues involved. John H. Yoder's "Review and Discussion" is much more than a review; it is a theological report and critique, and as such is a significant contribution to the understanding of the origin and character of the ethics of Swiss Anabaptism.

CORRECTIONS

In the April 1960 number of the REVIEW the authorship of the article "Anabaptism in Württemberg" was erroneously assigned to Gerhard Hein. The author is the late Gustav Bossert, Jr., supplemented by H. S. Bender. Apologies are herewith tendered to all involved.

In the October 1960 number of the REVIEW an erroneous footnote found its way onto page 274. This footnote should be deleted. Apologies are herewith tendered to the author of the article, Robert Friedmann, who was not responsible for the footnote.

In the October 1960 number, page 298, the death date of Ulrich Engel was uncertain. New evidence from the Bond of the Administrators of Ulrich Engel's estate, found in the Lancaster County Courthouse, and dated June 14, 1757, now fixes the death date as shortly before that time.